



Edgar Lee Masters

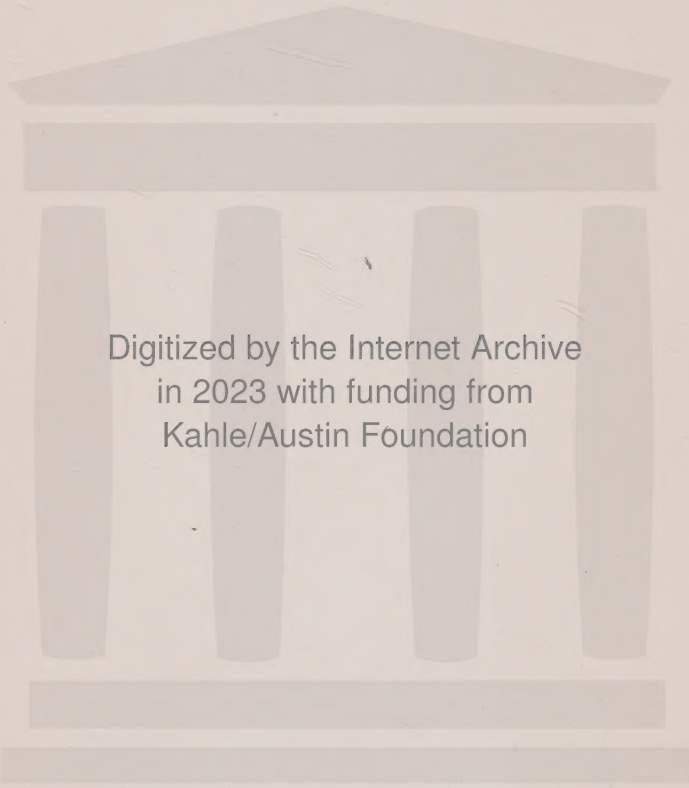
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JACK KELSO



# JACK KELSO

*A Dramatic Poem*

BY

Edgar Lee Masters



D. APPLETON AND COMPANY

NEW YORK      LONDON      MCMXXVIII

PS 3525  
A83 J3  
1928

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*Printed in the United States of America*



JACK KELSO



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ACT ONE

*Scene 1: On the hill overlooking the Rutledge Mill on the Sangamon River. Jack Kelso lies stretched on the grass under the shadow of an oak tree. At his side is a fishing pole with line and hook. He has been reading Shakespeare, but the book has fallen from his hands. He is plucking at the grass, at times looking up at the clouds, at others down at the river, or across it to the grassy slopes and hills beyond, where here and there the log cabins of the early settlers can be seen in the bright sunlight.*

KELSO (*in meditation*)

I wonder if the wise and great,  
The winners, doers of high estate,  
Have idiot moments separate  
Of nothingness from fullest life,  
Pauses and rests that like a knife  
Sever the hours and leave between  
Mere emptiness or dull routine?  
Somehow this Shakespeare seems to me  
A soul from folly always free;  
A poet, actor, whom no hour  
Robbed of his usefulness and power.  
Duncan is in his grave! How clear  
These wonder words fall on the ear.  
For such a man the seasons flew

With always something sweet and new.  
He saw, he felt and then expressed,  
He had no clutter of the breast.  
But I, poor devil, cannot link  
My dreams together. When I think  
The visions vanish like a cloud,  
And I sit staring, empty browed.  
Then nothingness of life is mine.  
Duncan is in his grave! Resign  
The quest, Jack Kelso—better you  
Were in your grave forever, too.  
You can do nothing but sweat and grunt,  
And cut the wood and fish and hunt,  
And wander lonely with an eye  
That takes more from the summer sky,  
The hills and river than you use,  
Or understand. To have a Muse  
So tongue-tied is to be accursed.  
Tomorrow and tomorrow. At first  
And for the moment I forgot  
These words that speak the common lot  
Of blankness and of weariness.  
It is an idiot's tale and less.  
How did I come here to this place,  
And how this weary fate embrace?  
I have a gift of prophecy,  
And what is coming can foresee.  
Those so endowed themselves are prone  
To help construct what is foreshown.  
I saw the future and to it drew,

But shaped the trap I walked into.  
Something perverse in man impels  
His steps reluctant, whispers else  
The thing will not be as you see it;  
The scene awaits you, therefore be it;  
You have the true prophetic eye,  
Its vision help to justify.  
Fate then! The poor soul walks the floor,  
And ventures nothing, bars the door;  
Or, tiring, opens it, on the street  
Faces the foe it feared to meet,  
Yet knew was waiting all the while.  
So have I wandered many a mile.  
But what's to do with life that's flying  
But live it along to the day of dying,  
Seeing the minutes' facts defile  
Before one and emerge as truth?  
So passes into age our youth!  
Oh, cruel age that comes so fast!  
How men would punish a hand that made  
Some cabinet secure and glassed  
To which the victim was betrayed,  
And locked in view, while a devil fume  
Turned hair from black to hair of gray,  
And wrinkled brows and took the bloom  
Of cheeks and laughing lips away;  
And shriveled the shanks and stooped the shoulders,  
Then let the wretch out for beholders  
To pity to his dying day?  
Yet this is what high heaven does



To each and every one of us.  
How did I come here? Well, I know.  
The will to freedom led me on.  
It was my passion, courage, brawn  
That wedded Sarah for weal or woe.  
I am not one who should have married  
To be tied down to a daily duty,  
And by a mate be held and harried  
For bread and butter and kitchen booty.  
Had I a chum here of my kind,  
A reading fellow, a kindred mind  
With him and Nature I could let  
The years drift and the past forget.  
Forget the present—forget in chief  
The whole world, nearly, turned a thief.  
Forget that life is just devouring,  
And keep my love for men from souring.  
Forget my father's fate, who sealed  
His patriot faith at Villere's field.  
Forget America remains  
A British province for all our pains,  
By British ruled, by British wrought  
With money, commerce, and with thought.  
Yes, by this book, too, which may pave  
Our freedom—Duncan is in his grave!  
So should the past be. But at last  
I would be loosened from the past,  
Forget the satchel I am saving  
For wandering further when the time  
Says, "Wander, Jack." Forget the craving,

The torture of insistent rhyme.  
What do I say? What richer gift is granted  
To man than has been given thus to me?  
Spirit, or God, or what it was implanted  
Power in my soul to know the ecstasy  
Of river and woodland, and the rising moon;  
The winter's snow which clothes the fields with stillness;  
And April's flowering when the hills bestrewn  
With dogwood listen to the jay's loud shrillness,  
Be with me still! Beside the wooded stream,  
And on this height of trees and shifting shadows  
Let me explore the universal dream,  
And breathe its secret in the quiet meadows.  
I am content with Nature, in the woods  
Tracing the wild bee, in the open gazing  
The hawk's flight with a thousand brotherhoods  
Of sound and scene their rapturous spirit praising.

*(He hears the voice of Sarah calling him and lies still.)*

SARAH

Oh Jack! J-a-c-k!

*(She draws near and discovers him.)*

Where have you been? You heard me call!  
Your loafing places one and all  
I've searched for you in vain.  
I need wood for the kitchen stove;  
The boys are here from Clary's Grove,  
And we must entertain.  
You'd think it was a festival

For Peter Cartwright given;  
They act just like a hungry drove  
Of cattle when they're driven;  
Such drinking with arms linking,  
And talk of politics;  
Such clatter and chatter  
And play of fiddle sticks.  
They crowd about in Offutt's store;  
They play at horseshoes too;  
They wrestle, and mess all  
The doorways where they chew.  
And I, poor woman, cut the wood,  
And bring the water in;  
And you'd evade me if you could,  
And never care a pin.  
With all your books and reading,  
And wandering and dreaming,  
And sitting under shady trees,  
Your duty never heeding,  
How would you have such resting ease,  
Or how your mouth be feeding,  
Save for the boarders that I keep,  
Or save my constant scheming?  
Now up with you from where you lie  
And help me scour and sweep,  
And help me make an apple pie;  
And get the corn for cake.  
You idler! You dreamer! You loafing prophesier,  
Quit gawking at the river now  
And cut wood for the fire.

KELSO

Shut up! Go 'way! Let me alone!  
You scold like Mentor Graham.  
I'm thinking of the people flown,  
And how the days betray them;  
And how this river took its way  
In centuries before me;  
I see it flowing when my day  
Descends to darkness o'er me.  
I say you're flying from the truth  
With all this clack and sputter.  
I've been a worker from my youth,  
I've earned my bread and butter,  
I helped to hew the logs that made  
The village of New Salem.  
Not many doorways here are laid  
But I have helped to nail them.

SARAH

That doesn't give you leave to rest,  
And play forever after.

KELSO

You talk as if you were possessed!  
Who built our roof and rafter?  
I want to know who hooks the cats?  
Who kills the deer and salts them?  
Who makes the garden, and hoops the vats,  
And boils the hops and malts them?  
Who in the summer gathers plums,

And picks the grapes for jellies?  
Who goes for nuts when autumn comes  
To fill our winter bellies?  
Who tramps for quail, and wades for duck?  
Who climbs the trees for honey?  
You'd be a woman out of luck  
Save for my hard earned money!  
I know you quilt and keep the house;  
I know you help with boarders,  
That gives you no excuse for rows  
Here with your scolding orders.  
I'll come back in a minute now,  
I'm reading, and I'm thinking—

SARAH

Another book! Well, I'll allow  
I'd rather you were drinking;  
For if you were you'd go to work  
When you had filled your gizzard.  
But now you read, and now you shirk,  
And lie here like a lizard.

KELSO (*looking through the trees*)

What's that? They're running down the hill.  
Ha! ha! Old Bale and Billy Steele;  
There's Bowling panting fit to kill!  
There's Rutledge and McNeil!  
And Preacher Cameron and Green,  
And Lukins, Armstrong, Miller!



I wonder what this fuss can mean?  
There's Steve, the giant killer.  
A wrestle, or a fight, a jam!  
I'm going!

SARAH

No, you're not!

KELSO

I am!

SARAH

You're mad as any hatter!

KELSO

Look! There's a flat boat on the dam!  
She's stuck! They're working at her.

*(He runs off down the hill.)*

SARAH *(looking after him)*

Was ever there a woman had such a man for partner,  
So careless and so vagrant, so thoughtless of his wife;  
A wanderer, a dreamer, an everyday disheartener?  
And here am I who cook and sew and drudge away my  
life.

O would I, O could I  
Bring back my happy youth,  
And all its hopes and good I  
Would do it for a truth!

A girl there in Kentucky, what evil thing unlucky

Enticed me from my happiness, and blighted all my joy?

And brought me to this slavery, this roistering and knavery,

And ignorance and loneliness here in this Illinois.

Surely at the beginning when me in hopes of winning

He showed his better nature, and proved his future fair

I did not dream such sorrow from morrow unto morrow,

Myself a weary creature with burdens hard to bear—

I would I could lie down in death and sleep away my care.

*(She turns and walks wearily away to her cabin.)*

*Scene 2: The river's shore near the Rutledge Mill. Leading to it from the New Salem Hill a winding road. Towering trees shade the side of the hill. The dam stretches across the river to a sloping bank covered with brush and weeds; cottonwoods, oaks and elms above these. In the middle of the dam a flat boat has lodged and is filling with water. Lincoln, a young man of about 23, sometimes standing in the flowing water, at other times on the boat, is prying and lifting to get the boat over the dam and into the stream below. Jack Armstrong, Joshua Miller the blacksmith; Onstott the cooper, and others, together with Jack Kelso, who arrives later, are helping him. Justice Bowling Green, Mentor Graham and Stephen Douglas are standing on the shore watching the work and talking. Various women, and other spectators soon join the crowd.*

GRAHAM

Why don't they lift that side a little?  
What they need is some hickory poles.

DOUGLAS

A knife, someone, with which to whittle!  
The teacher his arm to the cause enrolls.

GRAHAM

For a man of your size you're pretty smart!

DOUGLAS

I've always been able to take my part.

GRAHAM

Maybe! You'll fail, if enough you live.  
I'm older than you by a decade or so.  
My age has a certain prerogative.  
There's a sting in your words I could forego.  
I know you have worked your way to success,  
More reason for you to respect your peers.

DOUGLAS

I do, my friend, and those who are less.

GRAHAM

Less! You're an egotist full of sneers,  
You hardly belong in a place like this.

DOUGLAS (*laughing*)

Well, on my word, you are choleric.  
I meant no harm. 'Twas nothing amiss.

GRAHAM

Some seekers of office are politic.

DOUGLAS

I know. But my way is to speak right out  
In jest or earnest what comes to mind.  
I leave no hearer my meaning to doubt,  
Or search for secrets in them to find.

GRAHAM

Honesty, I suppose, you term it,  
The Andrew Jackson frankness, perhaps.

DOUGLAS

Yes, sir! I scarcely need to affirm it,  
I'm a democrat!

GRAHAM

And one of the chaps  
Who come to the West where life is free  
To play with fortune for what they want;  
That's a brand, perhaps, of democracy,  
I fancy the kind they have in Vermont.

DOUGLAS

Great Whiggery there. You'd like it there.  
You reverence Henry Clay, I surmise?

GRAHAM

I do. But it's nothing of your affair.

DOUGLAS

Also the Missouri Compromise?

JUSTICE GREEN

Whatever brings peace and quiets talk  
About the negro I'm strongly for.

DOUGLAS

Judge, I agree.

GRAHAM

On a rope for a walk—

DOUGLAS

Let slavery be, or we'll have war.

GRAHAM

Huh! You ignore what a bitter pill  
To Jefferson the Compromise was.

DOUGLAS

I accept the law with a loyal will.  
I don't go hawking and picking flaws.

GRAHAM

Certainly not! The law is your way,  
And getting better for you. But gore



Your ox and you'll howl. A dog and his day!  
That is your kind.

DOUGLAS (*turning away*)

You're a tedious bore.

GRAHAM

And you are a rascal.

DOUGLAS

And you are a fool!  
Go back and squeak in your grammar school.  
(*They threaten each other.*)

CARTWRIGHT (*coming up*)

If once on me the strength of the Lord  
Descends, I could whip you both, for fair.  
I say to you, Mentor, put up your sword.  
I say to you, Douglas, of hell beware.

GRAHAM

And I say to you, Peter, before the cock  
Crows for midnight you will deny  
The faith of freedom. A preacher's frock  
Can't hide your political heresy.

CARTWRIGHT (*striking Graham*)

Take that! And that!

GRAHAM

Get away from me!  
(*Armstrong leaves the dam and comes to shore.*)

JUSTICE GREEN

I'll hale you to court. Here, Jack, is a fight.

ARMSTRONG (*coming between them*)

Stop! Or I'll bump the heads of the three.

DOUGLAS

Let argument settle the matter tonight.

ARMSTRONG

Come up to Offutt's and have a drink.

Settle it that way. Lincoln wants

An auger.

DOUGLAS

Is that his name?

JUSTICE GREEN

I think

If I wasn't so fat, or an elephant's

Trunk was mine, I'd go out and lift.

DOUGLAS

Stay here on the shore and judge the case.

ARMSTRONG

Are you men peaceful?

JUSTICE GREEN

I'll patch the rift.

Where is an auger?

ARMSTRONG

At Onstott's place.

GRAHAM

An auger for what?

ARMSTRONG

Why, to bore a hole

In the boat.

DOUGLAS

He'll sink her.

GRAHAM

Bless my soul!

*(Rutledge comes from his mill to the shore.)*

RUTLEDGE

Who is that flat-boat man?

ARMSTRONG

He says

His name is Lincoln.

RUTLEDGE

Where is he from?

ARMSTRONG

Not far from Decatur.

JUSTICE GREEN

I think he has  
One gut for that small cranium.

GRAHAM

He's the tallest and thinnest man outside  
Of a circus I ever saw.

DOUGLAS

A freak!  
Where is he going?

ARMSTRONG

Taking the tide  
Down to New Orleans.

DOUGLAS

Or Salt Creek.

ARMSTRONG

He's a wonderful fellow, I tell you, boys,  
A joker, strong man, full of pranks.  
He isn't a mouther of empty noise;  
That man there with him is Dennis Hanks,  
An uncle of Lincoln's. They loaded flour,  
Pork and cornmeal over at Bogue's.  
And now Squire Godey in 'bout an hour  
Should be here ready to load his hogs.  
This trip of Lincoln's in fact is a start  
In the world for himself. And just last year

He cleared for his dad the better part  
Of twenty acres, or pretty near.  
I 'low his dad ain't much to brag on;  
His mother is dead. The old man farms  
With a couple of mules and a broken wagon,  
And two not very industrious arms.  
Judge Green, they'll need your weight on the boat;  
We're boring a hole, and tipping her down.  
When the water's out of her she will float  
With a plug in the hole, lest the cargo drown.  
I'll go for the auger. You fellows keep  
The peace meanwhile.

*(He goes up the New Salem Hill.)*

JUSTICE GREEN

I'll see to that.  
Peter, you ought to be feeding your sheep.

CARTWRIGHT

But nothing tells me to feed the cat.

GRAHAM

A cat? It's better than being a dog.

CARTWRIGHT

I'll trounce you again, you pedagogue.

JUSTICE GREEN

Separate now! You, reverend sir,  
Go down by the mill. And Mentor you  
Sit by the shore here. Neither stir



Till your color cools to a milder hue.

*(Cartwright and Graham do as they are bidden.  
Green stands looking at the work on the flat boat.  
The scene is now changed to the dam. Rufus, a  
little colored boy, is discovered lying half asleep on  
the top of some barrels on the boat.)*

LINCOLN

I've thought of something while in this fix.  
I can make a patent thing that will ease  
A boat like this.

MILLER

Are you up to tricks  
Of patent mechanics?

LINCOLN

A man in a squeeze  
Thinks of things. A fulcrum and lever  
Rightly placed are a help to backs.  
I'll name my patent the Sangamon Beaver,  
And end my career with the wedge and ax.  
Miller, I've thought of being a smith.  
I like the sound of the anvil's peal.  
We have a sort of a Lincoln myth  
That the founder's family worked in steel.  
I must do something. I'd like to read  
More books—

ONSTOTT

Hey! Kelso! Hurry here!

KELSO (*from the shore*)

What's up?

ONSTOTT

Jack Kelso would rather feed  
His mind than stomach.

MILLER

A little queer!

LINCOLN

I'd like to meet him.

RUTLEDGE

Hurry, Jack!

KELSO (*coming to the boat*)

Boat stuck, eh?

RUTLEDGE (*introducing them*)

Abe Lincoln, this is  
New Salem's poet with quite a knack  
For learning, no book ever misses—

LINCOLN (*shaking hands*)

I'm for you, Kelso. Here is my paw.

KELSO

And here is mine! You're powerful tall!  
How long your arms are! You could draw  
This boat off by yourself, or maul  
The best man of New Salem.

LINCOLN

No!

I've tried it.

MILLER

You have never tried

Jack Armstrong. No one here can throw  
Jack Armstrong.

LINCOLN

I am satisfied

To play at horseshoes, lounge and talk,  
Swap stories in the justice court,  
Go fishing through the woods and walk.  
I am a peaceful man, in short.

KELSO

You are my kind. My paw again!  
Stay here, and let this flat boat rot.

LINCOLN

My duty first.

KELSO

Well, do it, then

Return to us and cast your lot  
With me and all of us. You'll find  
No happier place, no better men,  
No sweeter spot for peace of mind.  
There's work to do, and food enough;

The Rutledge Tavern here is good.  
Game here is plentiful. We're rough,  
But hearty, friendly. And, reflect  
In three years rose this village, now  
No kind of trade here finds neglect.  
First there's the mill. And on the brow  
Of yonder hill is Offutt's store;  
Beyond the Tavern is Lukins' shop;  
I'll swear no fellow ever wore  
Boots better made from toe to top  
Than Lukins cobbles. Then beyond  
There is a tanner, hatter, school.  
We have two preachers. If you're fond  
Of liquor which is tasty, you'll  
Find all you want. The hill is high,  
And keeps you with the stars. By day  
The clouds sail over the bluest sky.  
The birds sing and the squirrels play.  
But above all this prairie land  
West of New Salem and the hill  
Seems borne up by a Mystic Hand,  
And blest with dreams that have no ill.  
Come back, Abe Lincoln, be with us.

LINCOLN

I'm half a mind to. How you soar!

RUTLEDGE

But sticks to facts.

MILLER

He's curious,  
Abe Lincoln, and he's plenty more.

RUFUS (*sitting up*)

I'm hungry, Mr. Lincoln.

LINCOLN

Well,  
Dive in the box and get some bread.

KELSO

Good Lord! This is a miracle.  
I never saw that kinky head.

LINCOLN

I found him hiding in the brush,  
And brought him with me. So it stands.  
But since my impulse passed the flush  
I find him heavy on my hands.

DOUGLAS (*from the shore*)

A runaway!

KELSO

Don't split your throat!  
Suppose he is? I'll keep the boy.

DOUGLAS

I blame that man who has the boat.

KELSO

We don't have slaves in Illinois.

*(Armstrong returns with an auger and a wooden plug. Hands the auger to Lincoln.)*

Here she is; and here is your plug.

LINCOLN

First the cargo must be transferred.

Hey! Mr. Ferryman, bring your tug

As close as you can.

FERRYMAN

Just give me the word

How close you want her.

LINCOLN

A little! Now!

Ready, all hands, for the cargo. Prop

The stern of the boat to lift the prow.

Pretty soon I want more men to hop

The end of the boat that's over the dam,

That fat man yonder.

KELSO

That's Justice Green.

Oh, Bowling!

GREEN

Hi!

KELSO

Loafing?

GREEN

I am.

KELSO

Lend us your avoirdupois—I mean  
Stand with us skinnier men.

GREEN

All right.

*(He crosses the dam to the flat boat. The cargo is now transferred to the ferry, the stern of the flat boat is wedged up. Then Lincoln bores a hole with the auger in the bottom of the prow. The water which has flowed into the stern begins to run out.)*

DOUGLAS *(on the shore)*

That Lincoln would ruin the state on a chance  
Theory to save it.

GRAHAM *(who has returned to the scene)*

In such a plight  
Save what you can in the circumstance.

DOUGLAS

Rescue the pork and ruin the craft.

LINCOLN

Look out, Rufus! Go where it's safe!  
*(Rufus runs along the dam to the shore.)*

DOUGLAS

Saving the nigger and sinking the raft.

LINCOLN

What shall I do with that little waif?  
The water's out now. All hands ready—  
Feet would be better. To the end as close  
As you dare to weight her. There now! Steady!  
Watch out, fellows! Over she goes!

*(The flat boat slides into the river below the dam. Bowling Green loses his balance and falls into the depths. Armstrong and Kelso plunge in and swim with Green to land. Great shouts and laughter from the shore.)*

ARMSTRONG

Bowling, at last you have been baptized,  
Immersed as the Baptists call it—

GREEN

Well!

I think I'd rather be Methodized.  
I call this a way of going to hell.

*(The flat boat has been brought alongside the ferry. The cargo is re-loaded by Lincoln with the help of the men. Meanwhile, Preacher Cameron, Sarah Kelso, Ann Rutledge, Hannah Armstrong, John McNamar, known as John McNeil, and many others have come down the hill to the shore. Lin-*



*coln steers the flat boat to the shore and ties it. He then comes over to the crowd. The sound of grunting hogs at the top of the hill is heard.)*

KELSO (*to Lincoln*)

Come! Meet some of the Salem folks,  
No better in all the world, I'm thinkin'!  
Give 'em some of your funny jokes.  
Ladies and' gents, meet Mr. Lincoln.  
Meet Peter Cartwright, no greater zeal  
Ever brought souls to the mourner's seat.  
Meet my wife Sarah, and John McNeil,  
Meet Stephen Douglas—

LINCOLN (*looking down from his great height  
upon Douglas' shortness*)

You're 'bout five feet.  
I'm six feet four and a half—

DOUGLAS

I know.  
I have no intention to make sport of it.

LINCOLN

However much hereafter we grow  
We'll always be the long and the short of it.

DOUGLAS

Brevity is the soul—

LINCOLN

And length

Of days and honor—you know the theme.  
My hope is to use my time and strength  
To win and deserve the people's esteem.

DOUGLAS

Think as they do then. That's the receipt.  
Shed off your linen and silk cravat—  
I mean of ideas. Feed their conceit  
With actual broadcloth and silk hat.

LINCOLN

But chiefly there is a right and a wrong  
Of everything, and that is the point.

DOUGLAS

Morality masks the plots of the strong.

LINCOLN

Your logic, Stephen, is out of joint.  
I must go my way—

ARMSTRONG (*bringing up his wife Hannah*)

Aunt Hannah, shake  
With Abram Linkern—

HANNAH

How do you do!  
I'd think your arms and back would ache,  
Tugging as you did.

LINCOLN

Good as new.

HANNAH

Come back and see us. Board if you wish.  
You need someone to mother and mend you.  
I'll fix you many a tasty dish.

LINCOLN

It's good when people so much befriend you,  
Aunt Hannah—

PREACHER CAMERON

There's tears in his eyes, I swan!

KELSO

Meet John McNeil—

MC NAMAR

Howdy! Howdy!

LINCOLN

Mc what?

MC NAMAR

Such talking and going on!  
My name's McNeil, sir.

LINCOLN

With such rowdy  
Bustle and noise it's hard to hear.

MC NAMAR

Oh, this is nothing. When you return  
Some day the Clary boys will come,  
And yell and whoop and split your ear;  
They're devils when they are full of rum.  
I'm temperance—

LINCOLN

So am I.

MC NAMAR

I like

A sip at a toddy now and then.  
But Preacher Cameron means to strike  
The bottle from the hands of men;  
Leave never a drop for chills or colds.  
I call that going a bit too far.  
What do you think?

LINCOLN

What the future holds,  
What's right, none sees so very far—  
I haven't examined—

KELSO (*to Lincoln*)

Come with me,  
And meet Ann Rutledge over there.  
She's John McNeil's wife soon to be,  
All settled—

LINCOLN

She is very fair!

KELSO

And good as fair.

*(They walk to where Ann is standing.)*

KELSO

Ann Rutledge, this

Is Abram Linkern—

ANN

Yes, I know;

They told me.

LINCOLN

Glad to meet you, Miss.

ANN

You've had some trouble.

LINCOLN

Over, though.

All loaded up except the swine.

ANN

I wish you were here to stay for good.

LINCOLN

I wish it myself. It would be fine—

It might be worse for me if I could.

I'm something of a fatalist.

ANN

What

Is fatalist?

LINCOLN

Why, it's Calvinist—

What happens, happens.

ANN

You've forgot.

There's heavenly grace.

LINCOLN

For the elect.

ANN

None who confess the Saviour's love  
The Saviour will ever at all reject.

LINCOLN

God rules, I'm certain, from above.

ANN

Your heart is wondrous good and kind.  
Come back to us! Wherever you go,  
I wish you happiness, peace of mind.

LINCOLN

May heaven's blessings on you flow.

*(He walks away.)*

ANN (*to McNamar*)

A sadder face I never saw.

MC NAMAR

You should have heard the jokes he told.

ANN

His melancholy seems to awe!

So young he is and yet so old.

*(Squire Godbey, who has been trying unsuccessfully to drive the hogs on the flat boat, turns to Lincoln.)*

GODBEY

One hog has strayed. I can't control  
These plaguèd devils. Perhaps you can.  
I've got a piece of ground to roll.  
My dinner's waiting—

LINCOLN

I'm your man.

When driving fails, it's time to lead.  
When you can't lead, it's time to hide  
The way they're going. With every breed,  
Both men and hogs sometimes you'll guide  
Their steps by wit alone.

GODBEY

Of course!

What's in your mind?

LINCOLN

You see this needle?

GODBEY

A spaying needle.

LINCOLN

A little force

To catch them, or with corn to wheedle;  
Then while these fellows hold them tight,  
Or utter mimic grunts to soothe,  
I'll sew their eyes up, blind their sight  
To what is false to them, but truth  
To us who choose and plan the way.  
Call the men over here.

GODBEY

Fellers! Hey!

Come help us here!

*(The men go over and hold the hogs while Lincoln sews their eyes up with the spaying needle. Ann, Sarah and Hannah look on. There is laughter and talk. Douglas watches the work, silent and half contemptuous.)*

DOUGLAS

They fight and squeal!

The hurt tomorrow will be worse.

HANNAH

Won't hurt 'em much, their eyes will heal.



DOUGLAS

Like every other human curse.  
After a generation dies  
The evil of their day is cured—  
For them I mean. Deceptions, lies,  
Once seeded, later are endured  
By generations. Who can say  
How far and wide the seeds will sprout?  
Men taking once the crooked way  
Forever travel roundabout.

HANNAH

Do you talk often to yourself?

DOUGLAS

What others should hear and well attend:

HANNAH

You are a cunning, artful elf.

DOUGLAS

A sophist to the very end!

HANNAH

Who? What?

DOUGLAS

That Lincoln with his boat.

HANNAH

I don't know what you mean. They're on!  
He's loaded every living shoat.

DOUGLAS

No, one strayed somewhere and is gone.  
So is it always!

GODBEY

Well, good-bye.

LINCOLN

Good-bye, Squire Godbey.

LINCOLN

Now I'll clear.

What shall I do with Rufus? Why,  
Jack Kelso, can't you keep him here?  
He is a good boy, bright and kind;  
He'll help your wife about the house.  
I've taught the urchin how to mind;  
He sleeps as quiet as a mouse.  
If I return I'll take him back;  
If not just keep him and defend  
His rights, the same for white and black;  
Be to him as to me a friend.

KELSO

I'll do it, Abe.

SARAH

I'll say you won't.  
It's me who'll have the work and care  
While you go loafing. No, you don't  
Bring to my house that woolly hair.

LINCOLN

Settle it as you may. I go  
Into a distant land, obey  
The tides and waters, ebb and flow  
Along an undiscovered way.  
Farewell to all. Dennis, my pole!

MANY VOICES

A wag! A poet! A wonder soul!

*(Lincoln with Hanks steers the flat boat down the river, finally disappearing around the bend amid exclamations of the crowd.)*

KELSO

Come, Rufus! You must work today.

*(The crowd goes up the hill to New Salem village.)*

*Scene 3: The interior of a log house showing a room containing benches; at the end of the room a platform. On the platform a table behind which sits Justice Green. At his right a witness chair. Many spectators and witnesses in the room. Standing before the bar Squire Godbey and Jack Kelso. Douglas is appearing as the lawyer of Godbey.*

JUSTICE GREEN

Any more witnesses, Jack?

KELSO

Just one.

JUSTICE GREEN

That'll be twelve, and twelve apiece.  
Evidence evenly balanced, none  
Is yet impeached.

DOUGLAS

You might increase  
These witnesses to the crack of doom,  
It's their credibility—

JUSTICE GREEN (*rapping for order*)

Quiet there!  
Order at once, or I'll clear the room.  
Bring on your witness.

KELSO

Take the chair, Mentor Graham.

(*He does so.*)

JUSTICE GREEN

Hold up your hand.  
The truth, the whole truth, nothing but  
The truth, so help you—

GRAHAM

I understand—

JUSTICE GREEN

So help you God. Sit down and cut  
Your story short.

KELSO

I'll question now.  
Is that hog mine or Godbey's?

GRAHAM

Yours!

DOUGLAS

Incompetent!

GRAHAM

I'll have you know  
I'm competent as you, the jurors,  
The judge or anyone.

JUSTICE GREEN

OVERRULED!

Go on and tell us.

GRAHAM

Tell you what?  
The hog is Jack's. I can't be fooled.  
I've seen him in Jack's feeding lot.

DOUGLAS

We want the facts. Move to strike out  
All mere conclusions.

JUSTICE GREEN

Anything more?

GRAHAM

Jack told me—

DOUGLAS

Hearsay!

GRAHAM

Not a doubt—

DOUGLAS

Object!

GRAHAM

Today at Offutt's store  
The hog was his.

DOUGLAS

Is this a court  
Where hearsay, gossip, goes for fact?

JUSTICE GREEN

Now, Steve, suppose you howl and snort,  
The truth can never be sidetracked.

DOUGLAS

Well, but the rules of evidence!

JUSTICE GREEN

Anything more?

KELSO

That's all.

JUSTICE GREEN

Well, Steve,

Cross question.

GRAHAM

But no impertinence.

DOUGLAS

Don't tell me what you think, believe,  
But what you saw. Describe for me  
This hog—

GRAHAM

You know as well as I  
What the hog looks like.

DOUGLAS

That may be,

I never saw it.

GRAHAM

That's a lie.

DOUGLAS

Contempt of court!

GRAHAM

Contempt of you.

DOUGLAS

This hog I say I never saw.  
And equal eyes can scarce avail.  
Respect must be for courts and law,  
Or else this government must fail.

JUSTICE GREEN

What is the question?

DOUGLAS

Describe the hog.

JUSTICE GREEN

Describe it, Mentor.

GRAHAM

To my view

The hog is Kelso's.

DOUGLAS

Well, to jog

Your memory, just an hour ago  
Didn't you say 'twas hard to tell  
Some hogs apart?

GRAHAM

I didn't.

DOUGLAS

No?



GRAHAM

I said that—

DOUGLAS

Oh!

GRAHAM

I said as well

That I could do it.

DOUGLAS

Then proceed.

Describe Jack Kelso's hog.

GRAHAM

He's black.

DOUGLAS

What is the hog's particular breed?

GRAHAM

I think—

DOUGLAS

Don't think.

GRAHAM

I know that Jack

Told me—

DOUGLAS

I want your knowledge.

GRAHAM

You'll

Never have that.

DOUGLAS

Nor need it. Describe  
The marks upon the hog.

GRAHAM

You fool!

DOUGLAS

Instruct me.

GRAHAM

When you don't imbibe.

DOUGLAS

Your honor!

JUSTICE GREEN

Describe it if you can.

GRAHAM

Just like the hog Jack Kelso's is.

DOUGLAS

Is that your answer, my grammar man?

GRAHAM

And good enough.

DOUGLAS

His artifice

Is like the snake's that wired out,  
And wired in upon a track,  
That left the looker-on in doubt  
Whether 'twas going or coming back.  
The hog, he says, belongs to Jack;  
Jack owns the hog because it's his.  
Such evidence betrays its lack  
Without a lawyer's analysis.

JUSTICE GREEN

If you are hitting at this court  
For holding this evidence appertains,  
I'll show you a Supreme report  
Which my judicial rule sustains.

*(To Graham)*

Step down.

GRAHAM

You didn't get much from me.

DOUGLAS

Being a Whig you're hard to get.

GRAHAM

You'd trap a man in perjury—  
You trickster.

DOUGLAS

You're a bit upset.

*(Applause and laughter.)*

JUSTICE GREEN

Order! I'll have no argument.  
Jack Kelso has no lawyer here.  
Besides this case needs no comment,  
I've heard this testimony clear.  
First Godbey says, as you'd expect,  
The hog is his. And Kelso claims  
The title, and I don't reflect  
On either of their honest names,  
When I say that it is natural  
For each to swear so. Strike 'em out,  
And let the issue rise or fall  
Between the others, whom to doubt  
Upon the score of being fair,  
And truthful, as they see a thing  
Would be to say that they would swear  
To lies—it's not my reckoning.  
Where are we then? There's twelve to twelve,  
All honest, all with equal eyes—  
At least I'll grant it, and not delve  
Minutely here, nor analyze  
The points too numerous in the time  
At my disposal. The Rutledge Inn  
Is full of people, and the fun  
Of dancing, fiddling, will begin  
Before we get there, or has begun.

We owe it to ourselves, the state  
To see what Cartwright has to say  
On politics, and estimate  
Our duty for election day.  
Where are we then? Upon the shelf  
I put the witnesses concerned.  
But Kelso wins. I know myself  
The hog is Kelso's. Court's adjourned.

*(Great noise and laughter. The people file out of the room.)*

*Scene 4: In front of the Rutledge Tavern. Here and there at either side and at the back several cabins. More immediately to the left a building, over whose door is the sign, Berry's Store. Men in a state of drink coming out. There is dancing on the green to the music of two fiddlers, who are playing lively jigs and reels of the period. Ann Rutledge is standing in the doorway watching the dancing. Kelso, McNamar, Douglas, Armstrong, and some of the Clary boys, more or less in drink, are dancing. Hannah Armstrong and other women are sitting near the Tavern watching; with them Justice Green and Graham. Others are coming forward, or disappearing from the scene. The full moon is just rising.*

A CLARY BOY

Go it, fiddlers! Fast as the devil!

ANOTHER

Make it lively with old Zip Coon.

KELSO

Look how far the west is level  
Over which silently floats the moon!

ANOTHER CLARY BOY

Glad that you won your hog, Jack Kelso.

KELSO (*dancing*)

Right is right, and must be the law.

A WOMAN (*laughing*)

Who tripped Douglas up that he fell so?

GRAHAM

Douglas is drunk, you see.

THE CROWD

Haw! Haw!

DOUGLAS (*brushing himself off. To his partner*)

Sorry, madam!

THE WOMAN

No matter, sonny!

DOUGLAS

Watching the people I stubbed my toe,  
On a root perhaps—

ANN

He looks so funny!

HANNAH

But steps so lively.

A FIDDLER

*Do se do!*

HANNAH

Mentor Graham, you should invite me  
To dance with you.

GRAHAM

Not limber enough.

HANNAH

Limber as I am. You mustn't slight me.

GRAHAM

The fellows are drinking, and pretty rough.

HANNAH

Come on now! And make Jack jealous.

*(She grabs him.)*

There! He goes dancing with Nancy Green.

GRAHAM

I don't like mixing in with these fellows.

DOUGLAS (*coming to Hannah*)

Dance with me, Hannah.

HANNAH

You're pretty mean,  
Mentor Graham, and I'll desert you.  
Stephen Douglas, I like your kind.  
You're little, but no one will ever hurt you—

DOUGLAS (*showing his fists*)

Not with these—

HANNAH

Or a piece of your mind.  
(*They dance together.*)

FINKELSTEIN (*to William Green*)

Too many stores here, they should combine.  
Let just one store have all the trade.

PREACHER CAMERON

Dancing goes hand in hand with wine;  
The two of them ruined many a maid.  
Who looks on a woman to lust—

KELSO (*passing*)

Without  
Looking so no wedding would be.



PREACHER CAMERON

I tremble to think of this age of doubt,  
We need a revival of piety.

CARTWRIGHT

I long to witness a great increase  
Of faith in God.

PREACHER CAMERON

And so I do.

KELSO (*passing again*)

Religion is only a skin disease;  
Churches, business and revenue.  
Same thickness, same deceiving hue.

PREACHER CAMERON

We'd stop such revels as this tonight.  
The Holy Bible—

WILLIAM GREEN (*to Finkelstein*)

The East and West  
Growl at each other for Jackson's fight.  
To have the Bank I think would be best.

FINKELSTEIN

For country and city.

MC NAMAR (*to Ann*)

Let's have a fling?

ANN

I'm a little tired.

MC NAMAR

Once to and fro.

ARMSTRONG

How lively Douglas is at the swing.

NANCY GREEN

There's Ann and McNeil now—

A FIDDLER

*Do se do!*

JUSTICE GREEN

This fiddling gets me for one quadrille;  
I want to dance the very worst way.

MRS. RUTLEDGE

Judge, that's what it would be, but still  
I'll chance you. Come now! What do you say?

JUSTICE GREEN

Nothing ventured!  
(*He dances with Mrs. Rutledge.*)

A VOICE

Get the horse fiddle!

MANY VOICES

Hey! Judge! Be careful! And watch your feet!

THE FIDDLER

Salute your partner! All down the middle!

Escort your partner to her seat.

*(The fiddling ceases.)*

FINKELSTEIN

Is Douglas for or against the Bank?

WILLIAM GREEN

Against.

DOUGLAS *(hearing them)*

I oppose monopoly.

FINKELSTEIN

And Peter Cartwright?

CARTWRIGHT

No upper rank!

DOUGLAS

I believe in sovereign states.

KELSO

Not free.

DOUGLAS

Free to do as they please.

GRAHAM *(to Cartwright)*

And you?

CARTWRIGHT

I'll give my opinion of slavery  
From the stump tonight.

DOUGLAS

And I shall too.

MANY VOICES

The stump! Let's hear 'em. There's a fight!  
(*Two of the Clary boys are engaged in a fisticuff.*)

JUSTICE GREEN

Part those devils.

A VOICE

Hi! Down he goes.  
He got it good for trying to bite.

ANOTHER VOICE

A black eye!

THE FIRST VOICE

And a bloody nose!

JUSTICE GREEN

To the calaboose!

(*Jack Armstrong arrests the fighters and takes them away. Laughter and shouts. Shickshack, a friendly Indian, runs hurriedly upon the scene.*)

MANY VOICES

Hey! Shickshack! What  
Is the matter, Shickshack?

SHICKSHACK

War's declared.

I'm off to snuff the Blackhawk plot.  
The Indians who went west prepared  
To stay are armed and have come back  
To get their corn land 'round the Rock  
River. I'm friendly, I'm Shickshack.  
I'm for the white man, mean to block  
The Indian chieftain's broken word,  
Who promised he would not molest  
The land of Illinois. The sword,  
Your rifles gather.

A VOICE

Now no rest  
Till every Indian devil is dead.

MANY VOICES

The war's declared! The war's declared!  
To arms! To victory! Powder! Lead!  
Let not a rebel red be spared!

*(In the confusion Shickshack disappears.)*

Where's Shickshack? Vanished from our sight!

DOUGLAS

This is a friendly Indian?

CARTWRIGHT

Yes.

DOUGLAS

Free trade and war we'll talk tonight.

CARTWRIGHT

And hold up Jackson with success.  
A president must be sustained  
While war is on.

JUSTICE GREEN (*mounting a chair*)

My friends, forbear  
With me a minute. War's ordained.  
Proceed now to the public square,  
And hear our honored guests discuss  
The issues of the day, the war,  
And death in battle glorious—

KELSO

Damned if I'll join the army or  
Help it along—

A MAN (*seizing Kelso*)

You traitor!

KELSO

Loose

Your dirty hands!

JUSTICE GREEN (*interfering*)

This is my job.

Till midnight in the calaboose.

Armstrong, your duty.

PREACHER CAMERON

That shuts his gob.

FINKELSTEIN

When war's declared discussion stops.

WILLIAM GREEN

Else anarchy.

A MAN

Is Shickshack gone?

ANOTHER MAN

Shickshack! Where is he?

A CLARY BOY (*very drunk*)

Shickshack? Where?

JUSTICE GREEN

Come to the square now everyone.

(*To McNamar standing with Ann by the Tavern door.*)

Come, John McNeil.

MC NAMAR

Yes, I'll be there.

(*They all go to the square but McNamar and Ann.*)

*The moon is now half-way between the horizon and the zenith. Very soon the voices of the orators, the sounds of cheers and laughter are borne afar on the night air. The whippoorwills are singing. Ann and McNamar stroll toward the hill above the river.)*

ANN

*Now the bee has hidden for sleep,  
And the butterfly folds his wings;  
And from field and grassy steep  
The musings of the cricket creep.  
Now the sky is washed with light,  
And the thrush no longer sings;  
And the hollow is cool with night  
By the river's wanderings.  
Now the moon above the hill  
Wakes the crying whippoorwill.  
Whippoorwill! Whippoorwill!  
Whippoorwill! Whippoorwill!*

MC NAMAR

You stand there in a dream. But let's  
Hurry a little, faster walk,  
Sit on the hill—

ANN

Some trouble frets  
Your mind, John.



MC NAMAR

Yes, I want to talk.

*(She proceeds a few steps. Then stops again to hear the whippoorwills.)*

ANN

*Sound of far-off voices calling;  
Sound of waters ever falling  
Under starlight by the mill.  
In the Tavern no candle gleams.  
The grass upon the grave is still.  
The quiet earth is tranced in dreams;  
The housewife sleeps away her ill.  
Now from the valley and river shores  
The bird of moonlight memory pours  
Its incantation on the hill:  
Whippoorwill! Whippoorwill!  
Whippoorwill! Whippoorwill!*

MC NAMAR

Come, Ann! And listen some to me.  
The moon is high, the night is waning.

ANN

This is a wingèd memory  
As if a woman were complaining,  
Too hurt for words, too hurt for tears.  
I seem to hear the pioneers  
Their memories of old refraining.

*(She stands listening.)*

MC NAMAR

Now will you come? Let us make haste.  
I want to tell you of my folks,  
And how my father was half disgraced.  
Here is seclusion by these oaks.  
Let's sit here.

ANN

I am half afraid,  
You act so strange! What is it, John?

MC NAMAR

I left New York and hither came  
To work at something till I made  
A fortune, having just the aim  
To help my father.

ANN

That was kind,  
Like a good son.

MC NAMAR

I love him so.  
He is a man of heart and mind,  
Destroyed by blow on bitter blow.  
The town we lived in was a hell  
Of Yankees. We were from the South;  
And all of them upon him fell  
With hatred and with slanderous mouth.

ANN

Why? Tell me.

MC NAMAR

Just because he stood  
For fairness, honor, peace and truth.  
But that made evil of his good,  
And wasted all his precious youth.  
The church was strong there and opposed him,  
All Calvinists, an editor  
Fought for the church, father exposed him;  
We had a bitter village war.  
I was too young to fight much, took  
No less my wounds, and came away.  
It made me scan the Holy Book  
With eyes unfriendly to this day.

ANN

I know. It grieves me sorely, John.  
Had he no friends?

MC NAMAR

You never knew  
A man more loved who stumbled down.  
The many loved him, for it was true  
They made him mayor of the town.  
Then trouble started, envy rose.  
That editor ran a paper which  
Attacked him and increased his foes.  
The issue was a dirty ditch  
For which this editor fought and lied

From week to week about it, till  
He almost broke my father's pride,  
But kept his way with iron will.  
He wanted to close the ditch or send  
The sewage by another way.  
At last the court took hand to end  
The quarrel and they won the day,  
I mean the editor did. Meanwhile  
At home he had no sympathy.  
My mother never ceased to pile  
Abuse upon him. For you see  
She really sided with the crowd  
Opposing him, and I believed  
That he was right. Well, he was proud,  
And he was humbled and he grieved.  
As to my mother she never missed  
A minute's chance his will to bend;  
And he stood watchful to resist  
Her view point and his own defend.  
It marked me somehow. Such a mood  
As hers will conquer either way:  
Stay with it and you are subdued;  
Fly to escape you turn to clay  
Moulded into a different soul  
Living a life to end the ill  
You fled to overcome, control.  
So lasts the evil of such a will.

ANN

How did it end?

MC NAMAR

Election came.

They turned him out, and he was poor,  
And awkward at the money game;  
And age came on him premature.  
He took sick on a New Year's day.  
For weeks and weeks he lay in bed.  
When he was well I came away.  
I wouldn't had it profited  
His life to stay. I couldn't bear  
The home life either.

ANN

John, too bad.

MC NAMAR

I hoped to help him out elsewhere.  
You know the struggle here I've had;  
How I have worked. I've hidden here.  
No one but he knows where I went.  
My name and place for many a year  
Have baffled every hunting scent.  
Now having money I mean to help  
This father, so beloved, and spurn  
The mongrels that around him yelp.  
I scarce can wait now to return.

ANN

Why have you hidden here?

MC NAMAR

Because

I didn't want to be pursued.

ANN

Pursued? You didn't break the laws?

MC NAMAR

No! But my father was often sued.  
And if his creditors had learned  
That I had money they would have come  
Upon me. So I haven't returned  
And I have made it troublesome  
For them to find me.

ANN

I always felt  
Your life had something to conceal.

MC NAMAR

Ann! Not from you. Here I have dwelt  
Not as McNamar, but McNeil  
I tell you now . . .

ANN

I'm growing faint.

MC NAMAR

To save up money it was best.  
Upon my record is no taint.  
When I come back we will be blessed.

ANN

When are you going?

MC NAMAR

Why—tonight!

ANN

Tonight! You mean to break my heart!

MC NAMAR

Be brave. Our future will be bright;  
Just for a little do we part.  
My horse is tied below the hill.  
It's midnight, Ann! A farewell kiss.

ANN

You have deceived me.

MC NAMAR

To fulfill

My duty.

ANN

But such cowardice!

MC NAMAR

Be juster, Ann.

ANN

Well, God is just.  
Like Lincoln I'm a fatalist.

Remember when these lips are dust  
If they were by a traitor kissed.

*(She kisses him.)*

Good-bye! Safe days and peace attend  
Your steps. You'll write me?

MC NAMAR

Yes, of course.

ANN

Write me as lover and as friend.

MC NAMAR

Lover and friend. Now for my horse.

*(He goes down the hill. Ann watches him till he disappears. The whippoorwills are still singing. A twig snaps behind her as Kelso approaches.)*

ANN

Who is that?

KELSO

Me!

ANN

Jack, is it you?

JACK

No other. What you doing here?



ANN

I love the whippoorwill, the view,  
The moonlight shining soft and clear.  
I'm going home now.

KELSO

May I go  
Along with you?

ANN

I wish you would.

KELSO

You seem unsteady, tremble so.

ANN

I'm cold. I don't feel very good.

KELSO

Neither do I. I'm lonely, Ann.  
I've thought of Lincoln all the day.  
He'd be my chum. He is a man.  
I wish he hadn't gone away.

ANN

Where think you is he now, how far?

*(In the distance the sound of beating drums, and  
loud voices.)*

A VOICE

Forward march!

KELSO

They're off to war!

ANN

War! What a day of hit and miss!

I wonder now where Lincoln is?

*(They walk on.)*

## ACT TWO

*Scene 1: Several years have elapsed since the events of the first act. The scene is the interior of Hannah Armstrong's cabin at New Salem, which is now the only occupied one of the almost deserted village. In the rear wall is a large fireplace with cranes, skillets, pots, etc., a few chairs. Hannah is at the spinning wheel. There is a knock at the door.*

HANNAH

Come in!

*(A man enters.)*

Who are you? How de do,  
As I'm a living woman it's you.

DOUGLAS

Remember me?

HANNAH

The selfsame eyes.

DOUGLAS

Not altered very much as to size.

HANNAH

A little fatter, and fatter of purse,  
If rumor's right.

DOUGLAS

It might be worse.

HANNAH

Where have you been these several years?

DOUGLAS

Everywhere.

HANNAH

Springfield, it appears.

DOUGLAS

Yes, in the legislature too.

Vandalia, Chicago—watch that town!

HANNAH

I've heard about it. Do sit down.

What brings you here?

DOUGLAS

I've come to sue

A man at Petersburg. Going past  
I thought I'd stop and take a look  
At Salem, see old friends, and cast  
An eye around here.

HANNAH

It's a book

Closing and almost closed.

DOUGLAS

Just so!

I climbed the hill, stood by an oak;  
Then turned around and started to go;  
Then from your chimney seeing smoke,  
I ventured, but I must confess,  
Save for your chimney, loneliness  
Has crept like grass around this hill  
Where once we danced that quick quadrille  
By moonlight near the Rutledge Inn,  
What is the news?

HANNAH

How to begin

Is just the trouble, there's so much.  
Everyone's moved away, for such  
A flight of people you never saw  
When Petersburg was once surveyed.

DOUGLAS

So ends the past and so is made  
A new age when the Secret Law  
Maps futures which before were hid.  
Who laid the town out?

HANNAH

Lincoln did.

DOUGLAS

Lincoln? What Lincoln?

HANNAH

Bless your heart!

Abraham Lincoln.

DOUGLAS

That's an art

I didn't know he knew.

HANNAH

Indeed,

He learned it here.

DOUGLAS

A funny man,

Amiable, eager to succeed.

Now I remember we began

To know each other here—those hogs

Whose eyes he sewed. Also he's good

At telling stories, or rolling logs.

Except for us two Springfield would

Not be the capital.

HANNAH

I declare!

DOUGLAS

Where does he live now?

HANNAH

Anywhere,

Mostly with Jack and me. You know

The Tavern's closed, the Rutledges  
Moved north to Concord.

DOUGLAS

And Kelso?

HANNAH

With us.

DOUGLAS

And Sarah?

HANNAH

Scandal says  
That she was killed—well, she was killed,  
But not by anyone who willed  
Her death.

DOUGLAS

How was it?

HANNAH

Well, one day  
Jack took his shotgun from the rack  
To clean it and it banged away.  
People divide about it. Jack,  
My husband, goes into a fit  
When anyone says that Kelso slew  
Sarah, his wife, and I do too.  
That's 'bout the long and short of it;

Except that Kelso cursed the war  
Against the Indians; when this occurred  
It gave his enemies waiting for  
A chance to sling at him the word  
Of murderer.

DOUGLAS

Yet still he stays?

HANNAH

And goes to Petersburg with fish;  
That's how he lives.

DOUGLAS

Where's Jacob Bale?

HANNAH

In Petersburg. They all refflourish  
In Petersburg, to tell the tale  
Just in a word. Waddell is there,  
The hatter; Peter Lukins, Onstott,  
The cooper—all around the square.  
All—I have fibbed, almost forgot:  
Squire Bowling Green is in his grave.

DOUGLAS

I'm sorry.

HANNAH

Yes, and Lincoln tried  
To speak a funeral piece, and gave



Away while trying, sobbed and cried.  
And I forgot 'bout William Green,  
He's in the south.

DOUGLAS

Where is that man,  
That John McNeil?

HANNAH

Was never seen  
After he left here.

DOUGLAS

And where is Ann?

HANNAH

Why, with her folks at Concord.

DOUGLAS

Well,  
That little Rufus, that nigger lad?

HANNAH

He ran away from here a spell  
Ago, about when Kelso had  
His trouble, I forgot to mention  
That Bowling Green tried Kelso's case,  
Heard witnesses with great attention.  
When Lincoln finished there wasn't a trace  
Of Kelso's guilt.

DOUGLAS

His talents shine  
With negatives. Oh, yes, where is  
That fellow named Abe Finkelstein?

HANNAH

At Petersburg, the metropolis,  
Followed the crowd. He's growing rich  
On mortgages. You'll see them all  
When you get there. I 'most forgot  
Tonight there is a doing which  
Will bring them here, a festival,  
Or something, given in that plot,  
Or hollow, just below the square;  
A masque, Jack Kelso calls it and  
The lot he calls his theatre.  
The thing is in a measure planned  
For Lincoln and Ann Rutledge.

DOUGLAS

Oh!

HANNAH

They will be married soon, they say.

DOUGLAS

The tavern keeper's daughter, eh?  
Red headed, isn't she, poor as Job?  
The word went 'round the Springfield way

He'd captured Mary Owens' purse.  
Lincoln would like to wrap the robe  
Of dignity around him, rise  
Above his station and its curse.  
Where's Mary Owens?

HANNAH

I surmise  
She's in Kentucky with her folks.

DOUGLAS

What happened?

HANNAH

Abe sometimes provokes  
A woman with his careless ways,  
Means nothing by it.

DOUGLAS

Not so sure.

HANNAH

Anyway, so they say, one time  
Mary and Abe, some others rode  
On horses just for fun; and I'm  
Told he just went ahead, nor slowed  
For Mary. When they reached the creek  
She had to cross it best she could.  
It made her mad.

DOUGLAS

I think it would.

I don't call that a woman's pique,  
So then she cast him off? And took  
The humble path, the tavern girl,  
Whom John McNeil they say forsook—  
Or stole her from McNeil.

HANNAH

Oh, no!

He wrote himself into her heart  
When John McNeil failed so to write.

DOUGLAS

He never wrote her?

HANNAH

A cruel part.

He never wrote her. It was a sight  
To see Ann Rutledge when the stage  
Came with the mail—she looked so white,  
Trying her sorrow to assuage  
There in her doorway. And at first  
She'd call out, Anything for me?  
There wasn't. Later she didn't durst  
To call to Abe, so Abe, you see  
Would go to her and talk to her—

DOUGLAS

What was he doing with the mail?

HANNAH

Abe? He was Salem's postmaster.

DOUGLAS

And took such chances to curtail  
The prospects of McNeil?

HANNAH

All fair.

And now she is much happier.  
We all are glad, for Lincoln won  
The hearts of all here, everyone.  
Tonight there'll be great jollity,  
Better be with us.

DOUGLAS

Well, I'll try.

HANNAH

They're bringing luncheon baskets too,  
Fried fish and chicken, cake and pie.  
It's good again to look on you.

DOUGLAS

And you. So for the time good-bye.

*(He goes out followed by Hannah. They pass the  
Rutledge Tavern.)*

DOUGLAS

This end here of the Tavern sinks;  
The clay is falling from the chinks.

The door flaps wearily in the wind;  
The roof looks like a forehead thinned  
Of youthful hair. What happiness  
Laughed by this ruined hearthstone—

HANNAH

Yes.

But never so bright till Lincoln came.  
Right here is where he used to sit,  
His face clear in the mounting flame;  
Around him, roaring at his wit,  
The men sat while the women cleared  
The supper things. When all were gone  
He'd study, figure till we feared  
He'd sicken, working to the dawn.  
You see that ladder? Oh, how oft  
I've seen him climb it to the loft.  
The melancholy took him some.  
Then he'd go hide, or walk or sleep,  
Or read a little with his chum,  
Jack Kelso.

DOUGLAS

*Sic transit gloria—*

HANNAH

What?

The day of rest they didn't keep.  
And Samuel Hill and Preacher Cameron  
Kept up a pretty lively hammering  
Upon them for it.

DOUGLAS

Good for them :

HANNAH

You don't like Lincoln. I know why:  
He won the Blackhawk captaincy,  
The while you lost it.

DOUGLAS

I condemn

His politics.

HANNAH

And this I say:

When a fellow travels on shank's horse  
Clear from New Orleans to fight, obey  
His country's call, then I endorse  
Whatever he does to win the lead  
To captain soldiers, die or bleed.

DOUGLAS

All right, Aurt Hannah, I'll be going.

*(He mounts a stump in order to get on his horse.)*

HANNAH

Good-bye!

DOUGLAS

Good-bye!

HANNAH

He is too knowing.

I never saw a man so young  
With such a smartness, such a tongue.

*Scene 2: The interior of Joshua Miller's abandoned blacksmith shop. Nothing is in the room but a litter of iron and wood. Under a window stands an old work bench. On it are scattered a number of huge masks which Lincoln and Kelso are decorating with paint. Pots and brushes are on the table and remnants of cardboard.*

KELSO

Paint that one redder. Make it frightful.  
He was a handsome god but spiteful.

LINCOLN

You call him Ares?

KELSO

Same as Mars.  
Jack Armstrong, wrestler, speaks the part.

LINCOLN

Who is Hephaistos?

KELSO

Miller the smith.



LINCOLN

I mean who is he in the myth?

KELSO

So far as goes this evening's art  
He is Olympia's blacksmith lamed,  
Who fashioned helmets, swords and spears  
For Ares for the battle famed.  
This lameness signifies the shop,  
The factory, commerce, business spheres  
Which though by striving get on top,  
Yet limp, by highest heaven stayed.

LINCOLN

Yet business is the country's trade.

KELSO

The kitchen is. I'd like to see  
The parlor share its polity.  
Well, now the god of war, this Ares,  
Venus the lovely goddess marries.  
That means that love and battle thrive,  
Together, means the fair are thrilled  
When men with slaughter weapons strive.

LINCOLN

They grieve, too, when their men are killed.

KELSO

Grieve, but they love it. Another fact:  
Marriage means children, and before

War is, lest later the country lacked  
Children, old Nature seems to pour  
New life out to replace the dead.

LINCOLN

What funny notions fill your head!

KELSO

I've read that somewhere. Anyway,  
Ann Rutledge the Venus part will play.  
Now Mars and Venus in the story  
Produced the child Harmonia.  
That would be peace; and peace's glory  
If only Hephaistos kept his place.  
He didn't, but sought to emulate  
Ares and capture for a mate  
Venus, like business keeping pace  
With war. And so Hephaistos stole  
The bride of Ares; who soon returned  
To Mars again. The blacksmith burned  
With jealousy and took his toll  
Of sweet revenge. With iron wrought  
He made a net and spread it out,  
And in its tangle the lovers caught,  
Then other meanness he went about.  
The child Harmonia had set  
Her wedding day when she would marry  
Cadmus who made the alphabet.  
Cadmus is Mentor Graham—

LINCOLN

Very

Unfit for letters, if not for peace.

KELSO

Best I can do, too late to shift  
The characters. But to go on,  
The blacksmith sends a wedding gift,  
An iron necklace by his brawn  
Fashioned with magic which overtakes  
The lovers at their nuptial.  
They look upon it and turn to snakes,  
And toward the weeds begin to crawl.  
And so when war and business quarrel  
Learning and peace go on their bellies,  
That is the masque and that the moral.  
Consider me what a raging hell is  
Over my life and just because  
I stood against the Blackhawk mess.  
What do you think?

LINCOLN

I must confess

I stand for country and the laws.

KELSO

The laws! I'd like to draw their claws.  
They serve the man who overawes  
With privilege the weak and poor.

LINCOLN

They serve the humble man be sure.  
My lawyer's creed invokes the word  
Of reverence for the laws. I'd see  
Children to songs and praise be stirred  
By primers, and fidelity  
Given by pulpit and by court,  
Until the rich, the poor, the old,  
The young, all colors, would support  
The laws and deepest reverence  
Be paid them and obedience.

KELSO

You stand not for the higher law?

LINCOLN

That will be reached as men withdraw  
From every self-willed course and aim.  
But as for that I praise the name  
Of Jefferson, and my assent  
Goes with his master document.  
I have no principle not contained  
Within its words and argument.

KELSO

The sanctity of the law is proved  
Meanwhile by trifles narrow grooved.  
Were there a statute which restrained  
The sending through the mails of tracts  
On negro freedom, then enforce

The idiot statute which infracts  
A law eternal—

LINCOLN

That, of course,  
Puts law and government to shame.

KELSO

How the gods laugh still at the antics  
Of earth's successes and romantics,  
Warriors, statesmen, or bards aflame,  
Who reel just like the blind and lame,  
Drunk with life, with fear distraught,  
Drunkards drunk on love or thought,  
And shouting in their drunken state  
Songs and curses at Fortune's gate.  
Whether the nation or village quarrel,  
Wherever corn grows, wheat or laurel,  
As valiant spirits, heroes or braggers  
They fight with words and fight with daggers,  
While heaven is laughing at the strife  
Of men drunk on the wine of life.  
Do you remember, Abe, when I played  
That joke with whisky in lemonade?  
And how I poured some old Madeira,  
And with it many a mad chimera  
Into the cups the people drank?  
How Mentor Graham's face was blank;  
How next his eyes so brightly twinkled,  
And how his cheeks with smiles were wrinkled;

How everyone capered, danced and laughed,  
And chased each other, chattered, chaffed;  
How soon they shouted, reeled around,  
Fell down and staggered from the ground;  
And bit and scratched and fought at last  
Until an hour or so was past,  
When all lay where the grass was deep  
Indifferent, weary, fast asleep?  
Oh, how I laughed! But so I sighed  
At the pale brow, the heavy eyed;  
At cheeks still with the madness flushed,  
At parted mouths in slumber hushed.  
I walked around them, sad but smiling,  
Sorrow for them and their beguiling;  
And for the madness I had made  
With whisky poured in lemonade.  
I wonder if the King of kings  
The world surveys and has surveyed,  
And man, too, with his little days?

## LINCOLN

If then you'd had these canvas snakes,  
So painted up to pull with strings,  
You'd given everyone the shakes.  
Tonight when learning's spots and rings  
With peace's crawl, Harmonia,  
Ann Rutledge and myself will steal  
Along the river's moonlit way,  
Where sounds no more the water wheel.

Now if I've helped you all I can  
I'll ride to Concord to bring Ann.

KELSO

All's done and ready except to paint  
These other masks—

LINCOLN

Touch up the eyes!  
(*He lingers and becomes pensive.*)

Sorrow comes in my heart. The plaint  
Of something is crying in my ears,  
Like whippoorwills, or autumn sighs  
For thinking of these happy years  
I've lived here in New Salem. Jack,  
This evening ends it, I realize,  
This evening ends it. From what track  
Shall I upon these years look back?  
No one will ever know what you  
Have been to me, and how you brought  
Books to me for my growing thought.  
Jack Kelso! What a friend! How true,  
How ever even tempered, kind,  
The hunter, wanderer, fisherman,  
With such a heart and such a mind  
To soothe, inspire. And even to Ann  
What a good knight when I was on  
That river trip! No more we read,  
No more we rise at early dawn  
To hunt. No more the clover mead

We tramp. Those happy days are gone—  
All gone, all gone! Forever gone!

*(He turns and walks out of the shop.)*

KELSO

Yes, gone! But who the heavier pays  
For having, losing those happy days?

*Scene 3: The executive chamber of the Governor at Springfield at the outbreak of the Mexican War, 1846. Portraits of former Governors on the wall. The Governor sits behind a large table. Near him are Finkelstein, William Green and Major Hoar.*

THE GOVERNOR

It's destiny clear and manifest  
Texas to take.

MAJOR HOAR

And all the West.  
And now that Mexico has assailed  
Our sovereignty, it's war at last,  
And war until we have prevailed.  
There's California, that's our ground,  
Fated as ours, the die is cast,  
The Republic shall be ocean bound!

*(Great cheering from the outside. The Governor rises and looks out. Cries of Major Hoar, Major Hoar.)*



FINKELSTEIN

They're calling for you, Major.

MAJOR HOAR

No!

They want to hear the Governor.

THE GOVERNOR

Go to the balcony first—if so

Later I'll speak.

THE CROWD

Hurrah for war!

*(Major Hoar leaves the room and goes to the balcony.)*

GREEN

I hurried back to Illinois

Foreseeing trouble soon to come.

I burst with patriotic joy

That I am here to give a sum

Toward raising troops, for I can lend

At easy interest and supply

Goods for the soldiers, and my friend

Abe Finkelstein knows how to buy

Supplies in Petersburg. I wish

That I was young enough to fight.

FINKELSTEIN

Great God! To feel so tigerish,

Yet know that all your youthful might

Is gone. But after all who wins  
A war, the soldiers in the field,  
Or older men with chamois skins  
Who keep the armies clothed and mealed?  
If I can't stand the weary tramps,  
The watches and the tropic sun,  
The young can't purchase bonds and stamps,  
Without which never a war is won.

(*Cries outside, The Governor, The Governor.*)

GREEN

They want you. Rouse them with a speech.

(*The Governor goes to the balcony. The scene is now changed to the grounds below, where the crowd is gathered.*)

THE GOVERNOR (*on the balcony*)

My friends, this unexpected breach  
With Mexico is not our fault.  
You know this. Theirs the first assault.  
We are a peaceful people, bear  
Wrongs in a Christian spirit. Yet  
Our patience has been mocked. We dare  
At last our rights, so long beset  
By insolence, murder, to assert.  
We do it with the sword. We pray  
The Lord of Battles not to desert  
This blessed land, as to this day  
He never has deserted us.  
We ask Him to sustain our arms,

And bring us peace with righteousness.  
From cities, villages and farms  
Thousands will rally to redress  
Our wrongs so patiently endured.  
For such a cause who would not die?  
Who is not now with swiftness shod?  
Who is not helmeted with hope?  
Whose will is not alert, matured—

A BOY (*in the crowd*)

For native country and for God  
I want to die—

A MAN (*by him*)

Such soft green soap!  
The war's to get more land for slaves.

MANY MEN (*seizing him*)

You are a traitor! Knock the knave's  
Head with a club!

THE GOVERNOR

My countrymen  
Let us have faith in God.

A VOICE

Amen!

THE GOVERNOR

Let us believe that right makes might.

MANY VOICES

On down to Mexico! And fight!

*(The Governor retires from the balcony.)*

*Scene 4: A room in the log cabin of James Rutledge near Concord Church. Ann is in bed dying. Mrs. Rutledge sits near her.*

ANN

Where's father?

MRS. RUTLEDGE

Gone for Abraham.

ANN

I wish he'd hurry. This is the day  
Of Kelso's masque. And here I am  
So ill, so ill.

MRS. RUTLEDGE

My daughter, stay  
Your worry and regrets. The task  
Of curing you is strained thereby.

ANN

I hate so much to miss the masque.

MRS. RUTLEDGE

That's nothing.

ANN

And I dread to die.

MRS. RUTLEDGE

You will not die.

ANN

Will Abraham come?

Did father really go for him?

MRS. RUTLEDGE

Yes, daughter, truly.

ANN

How wearisome

The wait is. Water! The room's so dim,

You seem receding, growing less—

I was not born to happiness.

MRS. RUTLEDGE

Your life, dear Ann, has just begun.

ANN

Beginning in some eternal place.

My life has been a life of woe.

If I could see my Lincoln's face

Only once more. I love him so.

MRS. RUTLEDGE

He'll be here soon. Be quiet. Rest.

ANN

Mother! Who is this by the bed?  
It looks just like myself, but bright,  
And gazes on me with eyes of light!  
You're weeping, mother. You turn your head.  
With long-borne tides I sink and drift,  
With breathing long I take my breath.  
Mother! Mother! Is this death?  
How dark the room is growing! Lift  
My head up, mother!  
(*She dies. James Rutledge comes in.*)

RUTLEDGE

Is she dead?

MRS. RUTLEDGE

Where's Lincoln?

RUTLEDGE

All the way I went  
Clear to New Salem, he wasn't there.  
They said there he was hither bent.  
I missed him somewhere, don't know where.

MRS. RUTLEDGE

My heart is breaking!

RUTLEDGE (*looking at Ann*)

She's at peace.  
How locked in sleep! How pale! How fair!

I'm glad for her. This is heart's ease.  
No more the longing breast which yearned  
For happiness.

MRS. RUTLEDGE

Let's say a prayer.

RUTLEDGE

No, for McNamar has returned.  
Just newly married. That is why  
I'm glad. My eyes are hot and dry.

*Scene 5: A hollow at the side of a hill used by Kelso for his masque. The back scene is the hill's declivity, and is draped for the occasion. The trees on top of the hill provide green rooms for the actors; and the level at the bottom of the slope is the stage, which is reached by a half-hidden path coming down from the top where the trees form the wing. Many people have gathered to witness the performance of "Hephaistos," and are feasting and talking village affairs. Behind the trees hidden from the crowd Kelso is arranging the final details, and helping Mentor Graham and Jack Armstrong to rehearse their parts.*

KELSO

Mentor, your mask! Again recite  
Your lines that I at last may see  
If you have them well in memory.

GRAHAM

Where is Ann Rutledge, Harmonia?  
With her I'll better get them right.

KELSO

She'll be here soon.

GRAHAM

Well, have your way.

*(He puts on the mask and speaks, Kelso prompting.)*

Cadmus am I, son of Agenor, king  
Of far Phœnicia, doomed to wandering.  
Seeking adventure—

KELSO

Knowledge as I strayed;

GRAHAM

Phœnicia is a land of ships and trade.

KELSO

A dragon serving Ares—

GRAHAM

The god of war

Guarded Bœotia's well, a place afar.

I killed the dragon, and sowed the dragon's teeth,  
Which sprouted soldiers—

KELSO

Seeking victory's wreath.



GRAHAM

The trouble started first about a cow  
Which I had found in Phocis, and to vow  
My faith to fair Athena, otherwise  
Known as the goddess of the true and wise  
To her I meant this cow to sacrifice—

KELSO

But first the cow was thirsty, so I went—

GRAHAM

To the well where lay the dragon all intent  
On watching it. I stirred the dragon's ire;  
He rose and blew upon me deadly fire.  
And then I killed him, pulled his teeth and sowed—

KELSO

I strove for peace, but battle I bestowed.

GRAHAM

But where I slew the dragon Thebes arose  
Far famed for beauty, and where glory glows  
Forever—

KELSO

Now this is no idle tale,

GRAHAM

Much truth is here which wisdom may unveil.  
The cow is food, is milk which feeds the young;

The dragon greed with poison for a tongue.  
The well is all that farmers need to grow  
Food for new generations—

KELSO

I'm the foe—

GRAHAM

As forethought and intelligence which strives  
For prosperous days, and peace-begirted lives.  
Indeed from Egypt later none forget  
I brought to Greece the famous alphabet.

KELSO

But to go on—

GRAHAM

The gods of war and love  
Were parents of Harmonia whereof  
None hears but grieves—

KELSO

Beholding how a peace—

GRAHAM

May flow from war, while commerce may increase  
Strife till a war break over earth again—

KELSO

So is it with the gods who play with men.  
I sought Harmonia's love,—

GRAHAM

And she repaid

The love I proffered. Now the blacksmith's trade,  
The craft of making helmets, swords and spears  
Grew envious and wrecked the happy years.  
Hephaistos was the blacksmith. He was wroth  
For Aphrodite, and her broken troth.  
And to avenge himself looked evil eyed  
On fair Harmonia soon to be my bride;  
Harmonia, Aphrodite's daughter—she  
Returned to Ares—

KELSO

From felicity—

GRAHAM

With grimed Hephaistos. Then he blew his forge  
And made the anvil ring—

KELSO

His hate to gorge;

And shaped a magic necklace—

GRAHAM

Being swift

To send it to us for a wedding gift.  
Harmonia and myself were proud and glad  
Because Hephaistos seemed no longer mad,  
And put the necklace on. With many aches  
We changed by magic into hissing snakes—

KELSO

So peace and learning were by trade and all—

GRAHAM

The woes of war made on the earth to crawl.

KELSO

That's very good. Remember now  
To speak so everyone can hear.  
Next Ares Armstrong show me how  
You can perform.

ARMSTRONG

Well, don't you fear  
About my voice. You'll find it full,  
And roaring like old Godbey's bull.

KELSO

Go on then, a little low but clear.

ARMSTRONG

Ares am I, the son of mighty Zeus.  
I love the din of battle, and the use  
Of sword and flame. Though hated by my sire,  
And men as well, I feed them with desire  
For spoils and conquest. Everywhere I wend  
To stir up men of peace to make an end.  
Yet laws and courts through me are prosperous.  
Did I not found—

KELSO

The Areopagus?

ARMSTRONG

Only one failure dims my victories:

Once I was overcome by—

KELSO

Hercules.

ARMSTRONG

Who gave to wisdom's goddess and to man

The dreamy apples, sweet—

KELSO

Hesperian.

ARMSTRONG

Who slew my ravenous birds, and cleared the stalls

Where oxen by the thousand by stable walls

For thirty years had dumped their—

KELSO

Excrement.

ARMSTRONG

Some say he is the people or president

Like Jackson—

KELSO

Now this Hercules as well

ARMSTRONG

Captured a dog and brought him up from hell;  
One of my dogs of war, it well may be.  
Except for Hercules all is victory.  
And if at last with fame he was endowed,  
And went to heaven sailing on a cloud,  
Like men who serve and win eternal fame,  
Still I endure, the god of sword and flame . . .

*(There is great confusion in the waiting audience,  
and shouts of War with Mexico.)*

ARMSTRONG

What's up? A war with Mexico?  
I'll see about it.

*(He runs down the path.)*

KELSO

Ends my show!

CRAHAM

I'm off to Petersburg.

*(He runs off.)*

KELSO

No need to snuff  
The candles, they were never lit.  
Out with the masks, the paper stuff.

*(He kicks the paraphernalia about him. A man runs  
up the hill.)*

## THE MAN

They're going, think it isn't fit  
To play so when a war is on.  
They're running down the hill.

*(Looking between the trees.)*

They're gone.

*(The man goes too.)*

## KELSO

Now to my little barren shack,  
And get my satchel down and pack.  
New Salem's ended. The pendulum  
Stopped as the hour was struck. Who cares?  
Lincoln and Ann? They didn't come!  
They didn't care! The heart that pairs  
Has better happiness.

*(Looks about.)*

How desolate!

What stillness! Darkness! Growing late!  
Out in the night now to your fate.

*Scene 6: It is night but with the light of stars. Lincoln and Douglas are riding along the Springfield highway which follows the winding course of the Sangamon River. They are just out of Petersburg and are approaching New Salem. Lincoln is on a borrowed horse, and in saddle bags thrown over the horse's neck he is carrying all his belongings. Douglas is riding a horse of his own, and is unencumbered except by a law book*

*which is tied to the horn of his saddle. Meanwhile as they come along Jack Kelso with his satchel is sitting near the highway across from the mill. He is waiting in hope that he will see Lincoln.*

## THE WHIPPOORWILLS

Whippoorwill! Whippoorwill!

Whippoorwill! Whippoorwill!

## KELSO

The moon is gone. The night is waning.  
This is a wingèd memory,  
As if a woman were complaining,  
Too hurt for words, too hurt for tears.  
I seem to hear the pioneers  
Their memories of old refraining.

## A FAR-OFF VOICE

*Swing low, sweet chariot,  
Coming for to carry me home.*

## KELSO

Carry me home. And where is home,  
Doomed for my life the world to roam?

*(He gets up and takes his satchel, walks about looking at the stars. Then he returns to the same place and sits down, keeping the satchel close to him. Meanwhile a mile off, or less, Lincoln and Douglas are riding side by side. Back of them the sky is illuminated from the bonfires in Petersburg celebrating the advent of the Mexican War.)*



DOUGLAS (*looking back*)

Look! Half-way up the heaven's arc  
How bright the bonfires!

LINCOLN

But how dark  
The road ahead!

DOUGLAS

Yet were we going  
Toward Petersburg this river road  
With this rejoicing would be glowing.  
One man or two are naught to me;  
For them no path is ever straight.  
Today lives for posterity,  
In us but buds the future's fate.

LINCOLN

I hate this cruel war. I hate  
The cause for which the country raves.  
Behind the patriot shout are slaves,  
More slaves; and on the other hand  
For breeding slaves more land and land.

DOUGLAS

Peace has her ravages no less  
Than war. In peace the robber thrives,  
The grabber, liar, the mean success  
Of cowards spending all their lives  
In trade, in getting laws that take

The toiler's living. I have seen  
New England still a virtue make  
Of Liberty—for the machine,  
And forge the tariff for her looms.  
But when a war comes other thought,  
Or feeling in the people blooms,  
With bright red blood and pulses fraught  
With honor, glory and with fame  
The country's spirit like a flame  
Leaps to the heavens. The scrofula  
Of slinking, scheming must retire  
To shriveled veins; the little law  
Of little morals, which inspire  
Fanatics and the village spire,  
Recedes before the Nation's wrath  
Evoked by Nature, Nature's God.

## LINCOLN

You talk as if there would not be  
War contracts and their aftermath;  
And no corruption, the decapod,  
With legs of greed and tyranny;  
No despot rules for speech and press;  
No wounding of the civil laws.  
Calhoun already has laid duress  
On pamphlets in the mails because  
The slaves in reading might be led  
To shout the Declaration. This  
Vile principle inherited  
Will breed the utmost tyrannies.

So much for war, and peace's knaves.  
Meanwhile there's Texas—and for slaves!

## DOUGLAS

And without Texas none you think,  
Or growing toward extinguishment?  
Well, I predict the tariff, wealth,  
And what they plot for link by link  
By creeping, lying, bribes and stealth,  
If not arrested will centralize  
The Federal power, till we shall have  
An empire walking in the guise  
Of a republic. Where's the slave,  
The nigger, or the hands that toil  
For pious privilege, who employ,  
And whip the hard indentured boy  
On all the tariff's northern soil?  
My former saying I repeat:  
Peace has her ravages. The breath  
Wafted from higher spheres to us  
To purify, is that of death,  
When men are noble and valorous.  
Death is the master of all morals;  
He stays the cruel and fires the brave  
For freedom, honor to the grave.  
He lights through progress and through laurels  
Eyes to transpierce or better see.  
And where one statue is revealed  
To Faith or Love or Charity,  
A thousand are that show their grace

In courage on the battle field.  
Courage! What courage? Death to face!  
Religion! What is that but fear,  
Or wonder seeking for a clue?  
Religion without the purple bier  
A scentless flower is without hue.

LINCOLN

Nothing can make it beautiful.  
I've seen death, for my mother died.  
And for a time she seemed to lull  
My grief as she were by my side.  
Then she seemed whirled away or flown.  
Without such loss to be alone,  
And feel it wholly no man has known.

DOUGLAS

Someone is standing near the road.

LINCOLN (*coming out of a reverie*)

Like us, some traveler.

DOUGLAS

Hey! Hello!

Who is it? There the fellow strode  
Back to the shadows.

KELSO

It's Jack Kelso.

LINCOLN

It's Kelso.

DOUGLAS

Kelso?

LINCOLN

Yes, you know

New Salem's fisherman?

DOUGLAS

Very well!

LINCOLN

He often wanders this way at night.

DOUGLAS

He'd give a woman a pretty fright  
Standing that way.

LINCOLN

It's possible.

*(They come up to where Kelso is standing.)*

LINCOLN

What are you doing, Jack?

KELSO

I've stood

For hours here waiting just for you,  
Or walking 'round here in the wood.

LINCOLN

What's wrong?

KELSO

Your being overdue  
Gave me a worry. I meant to stay  
Right here until the break of day  
To learn about it. I had to know  
Before I slept—or went away.

LINCOLN

Douglas! A little further go  
Along the road. I have some things  
To say to Kelso.

DOUGLAS

By the shore  
I'll listen where the night bird sings.

*(He goes on.)*

LINCOLN

You know this horse, Jack?

KELSO

Why, the nag's  
One of Squire Godbey's.

LINCOLN

Yes; you see  
These not too crowded saddle bags?

KELSO

What's in 'em?

LINCOLN

What belongs to me,  
All that I own.

KELSO

You're going—where?

LINCOLN

To Springfield. This is now good-bye.  
Hereafter I'll be living there.

KELSO

Well, Abe—you almost make me cry.  
And Ann—where is she?

LINCOLN

Ann is dead.

KELSO

Dead! When?

LINCOLN

She died at three o'clock.

KELSO

How long has she been sick abed?

LINCOLN

Only a few days. It's a shock.  
I am bewildered.

KELSO

I'm heartsick.

Did you get there before she passed?

LINCOLN

Just to the well by Concord Creek,  
That well there. Driving pretty fast  
A man came up, he told me all.  
He went on in to town to buy  
A coffin for her funeral.  
In Concord churchyard she will lie—  
Farewell—

*(He takes Kelso's hand.)*

KELSO

It must be good to die,  
Get out of all of this.

LINCOLN *(reining up his horse)*

Some day

In Springfield visit me.

*(He rides on.)*

KELSO

Gone away!

The town gone, Lincoln gone and I  
Off now to wander till I die.

*(He takes his satchel and starts in the other direction from Lincoln's way.)*



### ACT THREE

*Scene 1: A level desert land in Utah stretching in every direction as far as eye can see, with dusty sage brush growing here and there amid stones sprinkled about as if the place once had been the bottom of the sea. To the west about a mile away can be seen a gang of men at work laying a railroad track; and to the east a similar gang engaged in like manner. Many years have passed since the events of the Second Act. Kelso, who has taken the name of Philip Marlowe, is a railroad contractor. He is standing midway between the two gangs watching them as they approach each other to join the sections of the track into a transcontinental road.*

KELSO (*looking about*)

Well, here am I—or is it I? This scene  
Changed from the many scenes, New Salem's Hill,  
Means that the I, whatever I may mean,  
Is changed. And yet the old familiar will,  
And aspiration are not changed in me.  
My highest nature I have kept intact,  
My dream of goodness stays, or if it be  
Worn like a widening gulley, there's the tract  
Of land, of me, in spite of all maintained.  
Yourself cast in the mud, as a pearl is cast,

Being yourself a pearl, will not be stained;  
Recovered, washed 'twill be itself at last.  
Yet what had I to do with life like this?  
Business and tricks! A builder dabbling fraud!  
All but my inner self sold for the bliss  
Of winning Isabel. If she prove a gaud—  
No! Of all days my purest happiness  
Is now, the dream of settled livelihood;  
Marriage, a home, a vine, contented rest;  
My little satchel put away for good.  
For hopes like this I've gambled worst and best.  
Last night I dreamed what I have dreamed before  
Twice, and I wonder. In my arms I hold  
A baby—how it smiles as I adore!  
How blue its eyes, how sunny its hair of gold,  
Like Isabel it looks! I search its face  
Where sunlight mingles with its sunny hair,  
Making an aura of its smiling grace;  
And music sounds about me from somewhere.  
Last night this dream again. And as I gazed,  
Almost with ecstasy I heard a call,  
And ran to open a cabinet door. Amazed  
I opened an emptiness in a ruined wall.  
For having put the child down as I ran  
'Twas gone when I returned. And I awoke,  
And rose to labor, a contractor man,  
Kelso the hunter, dreamer, in the yoke!  
But ever a fear goes through me. Just a mile  
Of track to lay, and then I'm off again.  
A fear goes through me for the chance meanwhile.

But who's to challenge me but bigger men,  
These rascals who in peace and war time, now  
Have used the government; for this railroad grabbed  
Millions of acres, wallowing in the slough  
Of crookedness, with which I am but dabbled?  
I curse it! Curse the war, the far-flung plot  
For gold which makes the world of toil its fief;  
I curse the South's wrongs, the idiot  
Thieves who have turned me to a little thief.  
I curse the banks who make the laws in stealth;  
I curse the mob whose rulership is hate;  
I curse the lordship of insatiate wealth,  
My life I curse, save for regenerate fate.  
Isabel! For with her my youth's renewed,  
My dreams established. Let the country whirl  
With madness and by villainy be subdued,  
Through her comes out the best of me—my pearl.

*(A bell sounds in the distance.)*

Once in Missouri, once again  
At Santa Clara the very tone  
Of that bell sounded to me. Then  
'Twas other days so quickly flown;  
And I could close my eyes and see  
The Sangamon, and hear the bell  
Of the little steamer *Utility*.  
Now hollow iron and metal tongue  
Are empty of memorial spell.  
So much again for being young,  
Or being older with practiced ears  
Truly to value the vanished years.

For take a clapper and a shell  
Of iron, and you have a bell.

*(Joshua Miller, the son of the New Salem blacksmith, who is the contractor for the eastern section of the track, comes to where Kelso is standing.)*

MILLER

You're the contractor, I believe,  
From westward here?

KELSO

I am, and you  
Have built from eastward until we've  
About joined up with bolt and screw  
This continental track for steam.

MILLER

When I think of an earlier day  
It seems just like a wonder dream.  
My name is Miller, Joshua.  
And yours?

KELSO

Phil Marlowe.

MILLER

So I heard.

Where do you hail from?

KELSO

Illinois—

That is until ambition spurred  
My wandering. But as a boy  
I lived there mostly. Afterward  
Some in Missouri. Then I strayed  
Into the desert, evil starred,  
For me; was there when Mexico  
Tried to retain this very land.  
I didn't like it, thought I'd go  
East to New York, and try my hand  
At city life, and so I went,  
And found odd jobs. Living was high;  
I worked but couldn't save a cent.  
The gold rush came. I took a shy  
At digging gold. Away I sailed  
In the *Yellow Fever* to Panama.  
You should have seen how we were traile'd  
By sneak thieves, breakers of the law;  
How all the decks were piled with bars,  
Shovels and axes, pumps, machines,  
With food, with whisky and cigars.  
Away we sailed to other scenes.  
Arrived at Chagres we engaged  
Natives to take us to Cruces.  
They tried to bolt, our fellows raged,  
Drew guns, refused to let them pass.  
We yelled, "Annex the Isthmus," "Burn  
The town," and so the natives bore  
Our baggage on with awed concern.

We shipped again and saw the shore  
Of Sausalito. There the crew  
Was chained for fear of mutiny  
To dash for gold, without ado  
Leaving us. Such a sight to see!  
And San Francisco such a town:  
Four ugly hills of hovels and tents,  
Of rough boards, cotton muslin brown  
From weather tacked, and full of rents,  
For walls and ceilings. Everywhere  
Were bales and boxes by the shores;  
And thieves and gamblers, laborers,  
And drunken men and gaudy whores,  
Mingled with toughs and murderers.  
Tables for monté and roulette  
Were made of boards and whisky kegs,  
With bags of gold heaped. You could get  
A cup of coffee and two eggs  
For just three dollars. Miners scattered  
Small coins in gold too careless to count  
The proper change. And nothing mattered  
With those of the Pactolian fount.  
Well, I fell in with a Jesuit  
Going my fancied way. At last  
Found nuggets, cleaned up quite a bit;  
Went to the city growing fast.  
There I have lived. But when the plan  
Of this Pacific railroad rose,  
I took this contract, and began  
To lay this track and build depots.

MILLER

I wish I'd had a life like yours.  
Mine has been nothing, always toil;  
Always with drawers and with hewers,  
Since father left New Salem's soil.

KELSO

Where is New Salem?

MILLER

In Illinois.  
My father was the blacksmith there  
When Lincoln used to misemploy  
His time with wrestlers—

KELSO

I declare!

MILLER

With speeches praising Jefferson,  
And Liberty, my father said.  
Did ever a man leave so undone  
His country? I am glad he's dead.

KELSO

What! Did he wrong you?

MILLER

Yes, he wronged  
The Constitution, law, and sped

An evil for years to be prolonged,  
If never it shall be reproved.

KELSO

How do you make that out?

MILLER

I'll tell.

My father left New Salem, moved  
To Petersburg, not doing well  
Went to Kentucky, didn't thrive.  
There I was born in thirty-five.  
He labored making hooks and nails  
Until the very day he died.  
If he could see these iron rails  
His eyes would open big and wide.  
Dying he left us poor, in want.  
I went to work when I was ten.  
We had a little farm to plant.  
Soon was there cursèd war again.  
It killed my mother, for the strife  
Roared in Kentucky. Being true  
To northern principles our life  
Was full of trouble. When I knew  
The South was doomed, and saw the draft  
Likely to catch me for its cause,  
I fled and took a river raft,  
Eluding the battle of lawless laws.  
Arrived in Omaha, seeing there  
The covered wagons westward bound,



The crowded steamers everywhere,  
I joined a party, and I found  
Health, happiness and peace along  
The plains, the valleys and the heights.  
Our camp fires heard the joyous song;  
For sleep we had the mountain nights,  
The stars, the pine trees. We rejoiced  
Cutting our names on Chimney Rock,  
And let King Cotton angry voiced  
Make slavery its stumbling block.  
We built the cities, too, and now  
I build this track with scarce a curve.  
It links the East and West. Somehow  
I know but one thing, that I serve.  
I know this project is a steal;  
And what's to follow may be worse;  
I know there is no common weal  
Without some robbers as a curse.

## KELSO

What honest man who does not loathe  
The war, its later characters  
Like Stevens, Sumner, those who clothe  
Hatred with piety; sophisters  
Of righteousness? Who does not hate  
Free thought destroyed, the civil courts  
By cannon cowed, and state on state  
Impoverished where the judge extorts?  
Who does not curse the prison bars  
Of forty thousand peaceful men,

Who out of conscience loathed the war's  
Ruin and wrong of sovereign  
Rights, and the freedom of the press?  
The word is greater than the deed;  
And Lincoln's acts will make him less,  
Or win his name but little heed.  
But what he said won many a friend,  
In spite of hatred for what he did;  
So will it be unto the end.  
Poetry like a pyramid  
Lasts and uplifts men to the sky;  
While sand drifts over the rubble waste.  
Lincoln I've wondered at—for I  
Beheld him as he climbed and raced.  
It's strange to think such days as these  
Of Andrew Johnson and of Grant  
Should sprout from Lincoln—such robberies,  
Such rule of tyrant and sycophant.

*(A sheriff comes up, followed by curious trackmen.)*

THE SHERIFF

You're Marlowe?

KELSO

Yes.

THE SHERIFF

Ere you abscond  
I'll take you on this warrant.

KELSO

What?

THE SHERIFF

For padding bills—

MILLER

I'll sign your bond.

THE SHERIFF

Locked in a cell if you do not.  
For holding back material,  
For using steel inferior.

KELSO

That's lawful, Sheriff, in a war—

THE SHERIFF

The law is, never right at all.

*(The sheriff takes Kelso away.)*

*Scene 2: A long whitewashed room of low ceiling in the adobe house of Kit Carson at Taos. Carson is in bed. By his side Timothy Healy, a correspondent from New York.*

HEALY

How many trips in all did you  
On horseback make to Washington?

CARSON

Six.

HEALY

And it must be over two  
Thousand miles.

CARSON

Yes, over one  
To the Mississippi.

HEALY

Pretty soon  
Swiftly the trip of steam will be  
Accomplished, or by air balloon  
In days where months were spent to see  
The capital. How did you go?

CARSON

From Taos through the rolling land;  
Then climbing up the great plateau.  
Then through the gorge of the Rio Grande,  
With blues and greens on every hand.  
Such mountains! If these drooping eyes  
Weary and sick could see them now!  
Such brooks by shivering poplars flowing!  
Such heights amid verbenas skies!  
Such pink apache blossoms blowing!  
So to Tesuque and Santa Fé.  
Then down the mountains brown and gray

To San Domingo. Then the way  
Across the rolling land, the prairies,  
The river flats, the Alleghenies,  
Wading the streams and taking the ferries;  
On through Ohio's and Pennsylvania's  
Valleys and hills, till I beheld  
The Capitol's unfinished dome.

HEALY

Your Indian agency compelled  
These journeys?

CARSON

Yes, and bothersome!

But yet how happy! Old in bed,  
Old for my years I lie here dying.  
'Twas nothing, being breveted  
In Lincoln's war. Such glorifying  
Of me, Kit Carson, Indian guide,  
Gave me no pleasure like those days  
With Frémont on that wonder ride  
To California. This outweighs  
All other things and days, except  
My service to the Indian tribes.  
There is my saddle, which I've kept.  
You see I learned the saddler's trade  
Of Philemon Morris, the harness man  
In Lincoln's early home, New Salem.  
That very saddle there was made  
By Philemon Morris, for he ran

A saddler's shop when in Missouri  
He lived, and where I lived a time,  
After New Salem had ceased to be.  
That saddle's history, and I'm  
Sending it to the daughter of  
An old-time partner, near Salt Lake;  
A ring as well, before I shove,  
To keep, remember for my sake.

HEALY

What message shall I eastward take  
From you, Kit Carson?

CARSON

You might say  
Old things are passing, passed away.  
Tell them, I say, that life is dust  
Save men are kindly, brave and just;  
Tell them to treat the Indians fair,  
The negro, all the little races.  
But tell them lastly to forbear  
Their land lust.

*(The Indian Governor, carrying a silver-headed cane,  
and his son Swift Hawk enter.)*

CARSON

Come here, Governor!  
Let Mr. Healy see your cane.  
See, on the head is Lincoln's name,  
The date, too, while the Civil War

Was going on. Now I'll explain.  
Lincoln ended the white man's game  
Of stealing the Indian lands. He sealed  
Their titles fast, and for a token  
Gave each cacique a cane to wield  
Authority for his people, over  
Fee simples never to be broken.  
So now they hoe the melon field,  
And reap the slopes of hay and clover.  
Tell all New York about this, and  
Tell them that freedom is the land.

HEALY

Good-bye, Kit Carson, live to raise  
Our country from these evil days.

*(He goes out.)*

CARSON

Swift Hawk, an errand you must run  
To Salt Lake City. Here's this ring,  
And there's that saddle. My benison  
Goes with them for a near wedding.  
Just near the city the lady dwells.  
Take them and haste, they're Isabel's.

SWIFT HAWK

Captain, my feet shall not be stayed  
Till your commission is obeyed.

*(He runs out.)*

*Scene 3: Before Isabel's house near Salt Lake City. It is a two-story structure of adobe, with windows and balconies in the Spanish style. Kelso is lingering near the house, walking back and forth, and looking from time to time toward an upstairs window.*

KELSO (*he listens*)

Sweet sounds fill the rooms like zephyrs:  
Sound of her voice, step of her on the stair;  
Step of her coming foot in the room.  
Her face is like a flower given gently  
Before you are aware.  
Her face is like a daffodil in bloom.  
Daffodils are in her eyes,  
The sound of the brook in her voice.  
Her face is like the tranquil light of dawn  
Shining against the boles of ancient trees,  
Leaning amid blood tulips on a lawn.  
Red birds flutter their wings amid fallen snow—  
Her words flash so  
Out of a clarity of mood.  
Faces benign approve her, spirits linger,  
Saving and serving her with an interlude  
Of muted strings, of water over pebbles,  
Of dawn airs dying in the white syringa,  
Of breezes vanished in white summer clouds.  
Passionate pauses come as when the choir  
Suspends the altar incense with intense  
Intonations bright as fire.  
After that night, that night!



Sunlight in ribbons and cubes  
On tiles of gray, glistening on Spanish windows,  
On the ceiling's squares of blue and red rosettes,  
Making skeins, making frets  
Of light in a tangle of minuets.  
Wit of her! Like the sharp sweet laughing light in  
her eyes!

Her face is the sun's adorning  
In April, which laughs good morning  
To the little cousins of dawn, red roses in her garden.  
And her hair is the gilt of maple trees  
Smelted by frost.  
Clustered leaves have waved the daffodils  
Out of her eyes.  
I was in awe, seeing divinities  
Unfold from the nothingness of blue skies;  
And I beheld the white-green dryad in her eyes.  
We touched with hands together the Muse, the Giver  
Of reverence to our hearts,  
Entered our hearts by the river.  
It was our new-found kindred, heaven and earth,  
Blossoms, the serving fields of wheat,  
And God, our friend.  
God who loved us at last, more need for me,  
Who knew that where the leaves of nightshade cover  
The cavern of the dwarf he sat thereunder,  
Since that night of wine and lights.  
He waited in hope

That some time light would fail us when we grope,  
And wound each other. Now his spell was at an end,  
He has fled before life's wonder,  
Now that God was our friend.

*(He walks on, and stops again.)*

God is our friend! As well assert  
That mountain is. How I can drool  
About this woman, maybe a flirt,  
At least a human being? Fool!  
Jack Kelso, you're too old for this!  
Respect the dwarf, your common sense;  
Like wine or slumber take your bliss,  
Be sane or pay the consequence.  
Yet, on my word, this Isabel  
Gives me undreamed-of happiness;  
If she be honest all is well;  
She can, if willing, greatly bless  
My days to be. I must conceal  
How I was brought in court and fined.  
It's over now and out of mind,  
And satisfied the railroad's zeal.

*(He walks on in the darkness.)*

*Scene 4: Isabel's Spanish garden. It is afternoon. The sky is deep blue, a soft wind flutters the fruit trees, stirs the many colored flowers, and wrinkles the clear surface of a tessellated pool, around which are statues of fauns and Pans. Isabel and Brigham Young are talking together, seated under the shadow of the house.*

YOUNG

You seem to doubt this evidence  
Of angels and the golden plates!

ISABEL

You never saw such common sense  
Which with a mystic vision mates.  
Perhaps a thousand years from now  
The world will come to Joseph Smith.  
Time haloes many a spurious brow,  
A fraud can sprout a holy myth.

YOUNG

Do you believe in God?

ISABEL

I do.

YOUNG

How can you think that He'd permit  
Deception in his name, renew  
Deception till the truth of it  
No man could tell? What other creed  
Is by such testimony proved?  
These writings like a solemn deed  
By witnesses whom it behooved  
As truthful men to seal and sign,  
Attest the sacred Mormon Book;  
Attest the plates from hands divine,

The angels which they heard and saw.  
The wonder story in St. Luke  
Of Gabriel to Mary sent  
Has not such evidence to draw  
Conviction, nor the measurement  
Of proof that proves this document.

ISABEL

It may be so.

YOUNG

You don't reject  
The Holy Scriptures, I am sure.  
Our Mormon Bible pays respect  
To Christ, the Saviour, makes secure  
The truth of both. The two connect,  
And form one great harmonious plan.  
Christ to America descended  
To make a faith American.  
The Indians were the tribes who wended  
From Palestine, were changed and lost.  
These plates record the simple facts;  
They are the Gospels and the Acts,  
The language of the Holy Ghost.  
Look how our people have survived  
The hate of Baptists, Methodists.  
They killed us, drove us, yet we thrived.  
Look at this city! It resists  
Invasion, envy. See our fields,  
Our orchards, cattle, temples, gold,

And say not great Jehovah wields  
His righteous sceptre as of old.  
It must be so. Were this a lie  
Our faith and people both would die.

*(The clock strikes four.)*

ISABEL

How long the sun is bright and high!

*(She rises quickly and goes to the pool; then returns.)*

ISABEL

One time a rattlesnake lay there  
About the pool. My golden fish  
Just now seemed leaping to the air—  
Just gray leaves growing yellowish.

*(Young looks at her longingly.)*

YOUNG

Let never a skeptic serpent crawl  
Within your garden's lovely wall.

*(She yawns.)*

I'd like to build a wonder house  
Three stories high with a mansard roof  
Blue slated, with a handsome dome  
Topped by a weather-vane aloof.  
And rods with glittering mercury balls  
The lovely tenant to protect;  
And a porch with fluted capitals,  
And windows skillfully bedecked

With colored glass. An iron fence  
A lawn of beauty would enclose.  
A rising fountain would reflect  
The moon or when the evening glows.  
A good pipe organ I would buy,  
Pianos, too. I have an eye  
For drama, and I'd put a stage  
With all the proper equipage  
Up in the attic. It would vie  
With any mansion of this age.

ISABEL

What would you do with such a house?

YOUNG

Give it to you.

ISABEL (*laughing*)

Never to me!

YOUNG

I mean I'd take you for my spouse.

ISABEL

I understood you.

YOUNG

Will you be?

ISABEL

Oh, ho! I'll die with laughing.

YOUNG

Well!

Ahem! Though I seem very bold  
You scarcely know what you refuse.

ISABEL

A man already growing old,  
With twenty women, slaves and shrews,  
For wives already.

YOUNG

I'm as good

As any man of twenty-five,  
Vigorous, active, all alive,  
As rich as Cræsus—don't pretend  
You don't like plenty of coin to spend.

ISABEL

I'm rich enough myself to buy  
Whatever I fancy . . . I heard a step.

*(She goes to the corner of the house.)*

YOUNG

She acts just like a demirep—  
But what a bride!

*(Swift Hawk enters carrying the saddle. He hands Isabel the letter and the ring and stands straight and tall, but hard of breath.)*

ISABEL

What is it? I

Never saw you before.

SWIFT HAWK

I'm here

From Taos.

YOUNG

Well, good afternoon.

*(She nods. He goes out.)*

ISABEL

What is this ring, this saddle gear?

SWIFT HAWK

They're from Kit Carson dying soon—  
All in the letter.

*(She reads it, slips the ring on her finger, and hides  
the saddle.)*

ISABEL

Have you some silver necklaces,  
Some buckles, turquoise beads to sell?

SWIFT HAWK

Nothing! A little water, please—

ISABEL

You are exhausted. Rest a spell.

*(He sinks into a chair. She goes in the house.)*



*Scene 5: It is evening. The slanting sunlight is lying upon the garden, it dapples the wall of the house, where the poplar trees are shaking in the sunset breeze. A half moon is in the sky. Robins and thrushes are singing. Kelso enters the garden just as Isabel appears upon the balcony which overlooks it.*

KELSO

Up there! You lovely rogue!

ISABEL (*laughing*)

I thought

I'd seen you for the last.

KELSO

Absurd!

You got my letters!

ISABEL

A lover ought

To be seen rather than be heard.

*(He throws her a kiss, then enters the house. In a moment he has Isabel in his arms.)*

KELSO

All troubles, ills of the world take flight  
Once I have entered your garden gate.

ISABEL

How well you look! Your eyes how bright!

KELSO

That's love that takes the place of hate.

ISABEL

What hate?

KELSO

The world! I'm done with it.

ISABEL

Laugh, Philip, laugh! Its dullness pay  
With laughter, with your happy wit.

KELSO

Kiss me again! Oh, let me stay  
Forever here with you. You are  
The Witch of Endor.

ISABEL

Who Samuel  
Raised from the dead, his avatar  
Is you—not you?

KELSO

No, I am Saul.  
In all my darkness you rise a star;  
And you revive dead life for me  
When troubled by the weary pall  
Of hard affairs.

ISABEL

When is to be  
The railroad done?

ISABEL

It's done, my dear.  
I'm out of everything clean and clear—  
You hardly know how much that means.

ISABEL

Well, then be happy.

KELSO

I'm happy here.  
We can be happy as kings and queens.  
I'm free. I've come for you.

ISABEL

A tear  
Coursed down your cheek then.

KELSO

Out of joy.

ISABEL

You are so vital, just like a boy.  
You seem so young for forty-six.

KELSO

I'd made it less than that, not more  
Could I have done so.

ISABEL

That's my fix.

I had said twenty not thirty-four  
If possible. Sit here! Watch the sky!  
Just for a moment, and I shall go  
And bring you yellow cake and wine;  
A little later we shall dine.

*(She disappears, returning immediately with a silver  
tray with the wine and cake.)*

KELSO

How wonderful!

*(Seeing the ring on her finger.)*  
A new ring! Where?

ISABEL

I bought it in India, or rather  
'Twas bought and given me by my father.  
Looking among my jewels today  
I spied it, wore it for your sake.  
It means good fortune, so they say.

KELSO *(kissing her hands)*

It means good fortune is now. This cake,  
This wine, this balcony, this view  
Of moon, the garden, the mountains blue,  
Green trees and singing birds—but you  
Above them all are fortune.

ISABEL

Then

Be happy, laugh!

KELSO

Tell me again

You love me!

ISABEL

Love you?

KELSO

Above all men—

Me only. That while I am gone—

ISABEL

I live here waiting, sad, alone—

KELSO

Not that, but happy in my love.

ISABEL

How can you ask?

KELSO

Just tell me of

Your happiness, if it be such;  
And if you love me, say how much.  
This is the hour now to confess.

ISABEL

To such a priest!

KELSO

You love me, yes!

You love me.

ISABEL

I'll not say it now.

KELSO (*kissing her*)

So for your hands, your lips, your brow,  
Truth, passion and fidelity!  
I am repaid for toil, my vow  
To earn you wholly, for honor given;  
For money won to make me free  
Of all your riches, that purity  
Of selfless life might give us heaven—  
I've given you all.

ISABEL

I love you now.

(*He takes her up in his arms and bears her into the room. The balcony windows are closed.*)

*Scene 6: The garden again. The moon is bright now. But lighted candles placed in sockets on the house wall add to the illumination. There are also candles on the dinner table, which is being set by Yet Wei and Sing Lee.*

YET WEI

Some time since we were told to lay  
The table with her finest plate,  
Linen and doilies, napery.  
At his first visit it was. What hour  
Is dinner served tonight?

SING LEE

At eight.

YET WEI

Ten minutes yet. The cauliflower,  
The beans, potatoes now are cooked;  
The mountain trout are nicely broiled,  
Which José Maldanano hooked;  
The lettuce and the garlic oiled;  
The quail are brown. Our chatelaine  
Brought dusty bottles from her room—  
The last, I think.

SING LEE

Of Burgundy?

YET WEI

What's left of that reserved champagne.

SING LEE

A dinner for the bride and groom.

YET WEI

Surely our master he will be.

SING LEE

To please him we will not go wrong.

YET WEI

Go fetch the plate and soup along.

I hear them stirring. Strike the gong!

*(Sing Lee strikes the gong. Kelso and Isabel enter and take places at the table. The Chinamen stand near when not serving.)*

KELSO

How beautiful! How nicely done!

What are their names?

ISABEL

One is Yet Wei,

And one Sing Lee. The two were run  
Out of their mining claims.

KELSO

Oh my!

How is there peace? If you contend

They'll fight you to the very end.

If you are Buddhist, don't resist,

They'll maul you with the Christian fist.

All Chinamen from the better mines

Were driven to the abandoned claims

By torch and pistol. Harder lines

Enclosed them here. The Miners' Tax

Enforced by murder, blows and flames



Gouged all their gains. They whipped their backs,  
They cut their queues, their idols smashed.  
The Irish said they worked too cheap;  
Called heathens they were robbed and lashed  
By Christian zeal. In their behalf  
No one rose up to help them—

ISABEL (*raising her glass*)

Laugh!

KELSO (*drinking*)

All this was going on the while  
We poured out money, blood and youth  
For negro freedom, law and truth.  
You're right! It well provokes a smile,  
The whole thing is the golden calf,  
And these are crazy votaries—

ISABEL

Laugh!

Life is a tent. A principle  
Is but a guy which holds and stays  
The tent from moving to other days.

KELSO

A circus side show which displays  
Monkeys and freaks and snakes amid  
Discordant noise and stifling smell.  
I'd like to see a better show.

ISABEL

It might destroy you if you did.

KELSO

How's that?

ISABEL

The world and man must grow.  
If in a moment you could be  
Wholly yourself you would collapse,  
You would be burned up utterly.  
Think of your highest happiness:  
Such hours are given us in scraps,  
Our weakness not too much to stress.  
We would prolong them, we would press  
The last, the sweetest drop that saps  
The fruit of life. We can't.

KELSO

Perhaps!

ISABEL

You never heard me rail or whine.  
And I've had troubles. I detest  
All ugliness, all things malign—  
I love the beautiful.

KELSO

Here expressed  
In all you are, your garden, house.

ISABEL

But in my cupboard nibbles a mouse.  
How do you think this house is kept  
Provisioned, tended, cleaned and swept;  
The silver polished, the linen clean,  
The garden flowering fresh and green,  
All things in order and repair?  
By constant labor, constant care!  
Meanwhile the problem in what I call  
My soul goes on, my memories.  
I am like you a tragical  
Wanderer.

KELSO

Oh, tell me! Please!  
Tell me about it!

ISABEL

I never shall.

KELSO

Perhaps you lost a father, brother  
In battle, or a husband. No?  
Perhaps you mourn a distant mother  
Enduring some memorial woe?  
Perhaps you came here to escape  
America which is not real,  
But like a mirror and an ape  
Avoids the truth, or does not know it.  
Perhaps you hate the rogues who rule us,

Whom we call great the while they fool us.  
Perhaps like me you are a poet,  
Nipped in the bud, who thirsts and fights  
For freedom, knowledge, spiritual rights.

## A WHIPPOORWILL

Whippoorwill! Whippoorwill!  
Whippoorwill! Whippoorwill!

## KELSO

That is a wingèd memory,  
As if a woman were complaining  
Too hurt for words, too hurt for tears.  
I seem to hear the pioneers  
Their memories of old refraining.

*(The breeze blows the candle light in his face. She  
sees him suddenly very old.)*

## ISABEL

Yet Wei, more wine!

*(Yet Wei pours them wine.)*

Drink to the stars!

Drink even to the inconstant moon,  
Slaved by the monthly calendars;  
She will be going down too soon.  
But now within the sky she reigns;  
She wanders, changes, but remains.  
Be like the moon.

KELSO (*drinking*)

I am content,  
Resolved to be so. Pardon all  
Complaints that marred our festival.  
No word more of the government;  
But all of us, of you, my dear,  
Our life together living here.  
I've money now—

(*He is growing drowsy.*)

I've money now,  
Enough to keep you, or be free  
Of having you give help to me.  
It's funny, funny—but somehow  
I'm thinking of Jack Kelso's vow.

ISABEL

Who is Jack Kelso?

KELSO

I knew him once,  
But don't now, haven't for some time.  
He was a worthless, wandering dunce  
Who often tried his hand at rhyme;  
Invented masques, you understand,  
Great masks that hid the actors' faces,  
And made the characters for the revels  
As big as Cyclops is, or devils.

ISABEL

What are you saying?

KELSO

Don't I speak  
Loud enough for you? Never *mine*!  
I'll say it over. He loved Greek,  
I mean the stories—

ISABEL

Have more wine.

KELSO (*drinking*)

What was I saying?

ISABEL

I don't know.

KELSO

Something about this man Kelso.  
One time this Kelso lost a pig,  
Which old Squire Godbey tried to snig,  
And said it wandered from his drove,  
When he was loading them on—the boat.  
Flat boat it was tied near a grove,  
There by a river. Well, this shoat  
Was Kelso's—

ISABEL

Or maybe treasure trove.

KELSO

No, 'twas Kelso's, so they said—

ISABEL

The wine is going to your head.

KELSO

I'm just as sober as I can be.  
I'll finish pretty—presently.  
It's a good story, wait a minute,  
And see if you don't see the point  
Proving the world is out of joint,  
Its logic old, and nothing in it—

ISABEL

Well—

KELSO

A justice heard the case and ruled  
The hog was Jack's, belonged to Jack,  
Because, you see the hog was his,  
Just like the snake that made a track  
While going in and coming back—  
You couldn't tell—I'm talking sense,  
This is the whole of jurisprudence,  
Just dust that eddies, dust and chaff,  
I hate the rotten business—

ISABEL

Laugh!

KELSO

Suppose you laugh.

ISABEL

I can't at that.

KELSO

Well, no more stories then. Heigh ho!

We'll just—sit here—and drink—and chat.

*(His head falls back. He sleeps.)*

ISABEL

How in the candles' sudden glow

I saw his wrinkles, scars and seams!

The man is old, is very old!

What shall I do now while he dreams?

THE WHIPPOORWILL

Whippoorwill! Whippoorwill!

ISABEL

He started when that bird began

To sing. He is some wandering man

Leaving a past. What shall I do?

*(She looks closely at his face.)*

More gray hairs on his head than I

Noticed before.

*(Looking at his forehead.)*

Veins bulged and blue!

Surely his age he has mistold.

What shall I do? It's best to fly.

The man is old, too old, too old!

I'll go to Saltair. Here, Yet Wei!



YET WEI

Yes, madam.

ISABEL

Saddle my horse.

*(Yet Wei goes out.)*

ISABEL *(looking again at Kelso she spies a paper and takes it out of his pocket and reads it)*

What's this?

KELSO *(dreaming)*

I'll say again I took the gun  
Down from the rack to clean it when  
It went off in my hands. No one  
Can this dispute, or ever again  
Accuse me. Lincoln was my frien'.

ISABEL

Lincoln his friend! My father's foe,  
Who wrought my father's overthrow.  
I'm standing on a ruin's brink—  
How did I get here? Just to think  
He was arrested, and never told—  
The man is old, is very old.

*(She writes a note.)*

YET WEI *(reëntering)*

The horse is saddled.

ISABEL

The table clear.

Lock up the house, the windows close.

I'll not be back again tonight.

When he awakes this letter here

Give Mr. Marlowe.

YET WEI

Yes, all right.

*(She hurries away. The Chinese servants clear the table and close the house. Kelso awakes. Yet Wei is standing behind him unseen.)*

KELSO

What! Sleeping! Dreaming! I must say!

The dinner cleared. The candles guttered;

The doors closed and the windows shuttered.

Isabel! Isabel!

YET WEI

Gone away.

KELSO *(turning and seeing Yet Wei)*

Where?

YET WEI

Where?

KELSO

Yes, I said where.

YET WEI

I cannot tell you.

KELSO

You mean you won't.

YET WEI

I can't.

KELSO

Well, if you can't then don't.

*(He rises and looks up at the dark balcony. Yet Wei follows him.)*

YET WEI

She left you this.

*(Hands him the note.)*

KELSO (*reading*)

This afternoon I heard about  
Your trouble, and I'm sorry for it;  
No less I cannot but abhor it.  
Our comedy is all played out.  
I gave you everything once more,  
Just as I often did before.  
But laugh! A woman soon will cease  
To figure in your flesh's peace;  
Of that you must be sensible.  
Life is defeat at last. Farewell.

*(The silence of the desert night prevails. He looks*

*about him in a bewildered way, and then quietly disappears.)*

*Scene 7: Kelso, approaching the Puyé mesa in New Mexico, is carrying his satchel. It is midday. The great pine trees which are at the base of the mesa rise dizzily to the cloudless blue above.*

KELSO (*his mood singing to itself*)

Angels as kindred,  
Spirits of vision  
Rescue and guide.  
Darkness which hindered,  
Scent of the prison  
Dispel and divide.  
Strength that has faltered  
With doubt and with toil;  
Wonder that paltered,  
Hope that has altered  
Caught in the coil  
Of night and of day,  
Banish away!

In the deep sea of will  
Sink the dead face.  
For love that bred us ill  
Life love replace.  
Goodness ignored, repaid  
With unremembering hands  
Forget for life remade—

Swift fall the sands!  
Above us are the heights!  
Sustain us 'there,  
To see the upper lights,  
The all-illumined air  
Of universal law whereof  
All life is made,  
All failure, even the love  
That life betrayed.  
There the poor rags of earth  
Shall drop, and we  
Be clothed for newer birth,  
In peace, fearless and free.  
These pines, this azure fire  
Symbol the mind,  
Made clear, the soul's desire  
In light enshrined.

KELSO (*starting to climb the mesa—out loud now*)

So here is where I start to climb,  
And get a vision of scenes afar.  
That's all I've had at any time:  
A struggle, loss of breath, a star  
Too clearly visioned! I would not see  
Only the heavens, I would be.  
With so much of my being lost  
What is there left with which to live?  
Life after life behind me tossed  
What other strength have I to give?  
My honor soiled, my money failing;

No home, no loyal friends around me;  
At every turn some stone to wound me;  
Age drawing near, its weakness trailing;  
Of everything I am bereft—

No! For my courage still is left.

*(He reaches the top, and looks around at the far mountains and near at hand at the ruins of the Indian village.)*

KELSO

City that vanished before the Spaniard trod  
These canyons and slopes of gravel and clay,  
By the dwarf cedar mottled, and these valleys gray  
Purpled by wild verbenas; or these rivers knew,  
Where the soundless pollen over the grasses drifted  
From the cottonwood and the exhausted pod,  
Here were your walls and towers to the receding blue  
Of heaven from this lofty mesa lifted  
In calmness to the unknown God,  
By the wisdom of mountains and the tranquil endurance  
of light;  
And by the eucharist of fruitfulness, which, drawing  
near  
To the sky-retreating soul possessed this height,  
To adore the sun and the summer cloud with song,  
With flutes and drums, for the justice of rain to cheer  
The planted corn; and for the reward along  
The streams of game, faithful and without fear  
To Beauty and Life, faithful and calm and strong.

They were a people whose enchanted eye  
Chose this great loftiness to build  
Their city of the sky!  
They chose it for the shade of cedars, to lie  
Thereunder, and to watch the eagle gild  
His wings in flight on high  
Circling the spires of clouds. They chose  
This battlement of rocks against their foes,  
From whose sheer edges they could watch,  
Lying half open eyed, and count the blooms  
Of paint brush splotch by splotch  
Against the distant flap of the heaven's tent,  
Enclosing mountains snow streaked, where the glooms  
Of thunder purples crowned their blue ascent.  
For yucca, flint they built these storied rooms,  
This court, this kiva in the tufa carved,  
For the rites of gods, whose dwelling was this air,  
This sun, these cedars, these volcanic wastes,  
Where only the stunted cactus is not starved.  
But for that god of whom vision is aware  
Through vastness, over which the eagle hastes  
From distant peak to peak was this height chosen.  
War may have taught the caution of this defense;  
But adoration of color, form and the soul,  
Known only of its truest children, reverence  
Of the adorable secret, chiefly laid  
This city's walls, of which these scattered stones,  
And half-demolished walls are the memoir;  
And spearheads, bits of pottery, ax and battle blade,  
And boulders tracing still the zone's

Boundary of the water reservoir,  
Filled from the stream from patient jar on jar  
Borne up long steps, up ladders, up the cliff  
To the top and the vision of mountains afar,  
Where the god in snow has written his hieroglyph  
Of the cross, the still unfathomed emblem of war!

But these were saved by the ceremonial  
Of life as loveliness. Or if they died  
Their kinsmen smote them by the craggy wall.  
Blessed of the Father Sky and Mother Earth,  
No dawn of banded gold above the mountain side;  
No fleckless noon when the eagle flapped the hearth  
Of the oven sun; nor sundown, when the tide  
Of light washed back the pebbled stars, and mirth  
Of bone flutes, songs, bewitched the quiet air  
Of the court, beheld the horsemen in shadowy lines,  
The fateful riders helmeted in steel,  
The silver glint of guns far down between the pines,  
The amazement of men as beasts, advancing in zeal  
Of gold and of Mother Mary and her Son;  
Who had commissioned these centaurs to teach, to ride  
To the utmost bounds of earth and conquer every knee  
To bend to Mother Mary and her Son the Crucified;  
And to waste, slay, burn, and torture that this might  
be.

Blessed children of the Sun! The heretic  
To the Sky, the Earth, the faggot-bearing priest,  
The conqueror for Francis and for Dominic,



The betrayers of Beauty at life's feast,  
The Judas carriers of the money bag,  
You never knew! But from this skyey crag  
With passion for the Unknown God you ceased:  
As a tall pine when caught by mountain fire  
Emerges from the darkness as a pyre,  
And by wooers and herdsmen is watched afar,  
Till darkness is where flame was, and its spire  
Which touched the heaven has become a star!

The brother of the Father Sky is Time;  
And Time was reverent of these and moved  
By the pity of prophecy against the crime  
That rode into these villages and reproved  
Their worships and their visions with the sword.  
As the chieftains at night over the communal  
Fire of the court heaped ashes, so this hoard  
Of jars, of turquoise, baskets, flutes was hidden  
In burial places, and under the fallen wall  
By the Brother Time. Their songs passed unfor-  
bidden;

Their worships were never stained;  
Their poems perished, but these things remained:  
The mesa where they built, showing the vision  
That chose it of valley, forest, mountain, palisade,  
From which their adorations having arisen  
May be divined, if never again remade.

*(An Indian who has been watching Kelso comes over  
to him.)*

INDIAN

You like this place here?

KELSO

What a view!

That silver button in your hat—

You made it?

INDIAN

Do you like it, too?

KELSO

Yes, very much.

INDIAN

I'll give you that.

*(He cuts it from his hat and gives it to Kelso.)*

KELSO

Thanks very much.

INDIAN

You're traveling?

KELSO

To San Francisco, there to ship  
Around the world, perhaps Cape Horn;  
Depending. I must take a trip.

*(Kelso becomes conscious of a strange figure heaping  
flowers on a rude altar of stones.)*

What is that worship over there?

INDIAN

That? Oh, he has a hut below;  
He climbs the mesa to say a prayer.

KELSO

Who is he?

INDIAN

Well, we call him Joe.  
He heaped that altar to the wind,  
For so he calls it. He lives alone.

KELSO

With such a ritual disciplined—

INDIAN

He reads and gardens; I have heard  
Has money enough.

KELSO

Let's stand unknown  
A little from him to hear the word  
He utters to the hidden throne.

JOE (*before the altar, heaping flowers*)

Now after these years of treacherous altars I build  
To the Winds far blowing  
Favor or fault, the cunning, the secret willed,  
The blind but knowing.  
I will gather the stones and heap for an ultimate shrine  
To the Spirits Capricious,

To the Fates of Air, and standing await the divine  
Visitation auspicious.

*(His voice is blown away, but after a time comes  
back.)*

By this shrine to the Winds I will pause till a breath  
Speed the wing of the raven,  
And scatter its wildings, while quenching with death  
The hope of a haven.

KELSO

How strange! Is this his house? I thought  
You said he lived below.

INDIAN

He does.

No, this is where a man who taught  
Science has come to live with us.  
This is his labratory.

KELSO

Can

We enter?

INDIAN

Maybe. I'll inquire—  
The doctor is a busy man.

KELSO

Doctor?

INDIAN

Yes, Doctor McIntyre.

*(They come to the laboratory, and the Indian knocks at the door. Meanwhile Doctor McIntyre and an assistant are talking.)*

MC INTYRE

These cells no longer seem alive,  
Empty the jars. We'll make some more.  
Some twenty hours they seem to thrive,  
Then die. Who is that at the door?

ASSISTANT

I saw the Indian Cotton Tail  
With a white stranger hither stroll;  
They paused to hear the mystic wail  
Of Joe made to the cosmic soul.

MC INTYRE

Bring me a dendrograph.

*(A knock.)*

Go see

What is it that those fellows want.

Bring me an oxograph.

*(The assistant opens the door.)*

INDIAN

It's me.

This gentleman is on a jaunt  
Around the world, and wants a look

Around these rooms here. He has been  
All through the West, and like a book  
Knows all the country.

MC INTYRE

Well, come in.

KELSO

My name is Philip Marlowe. Pray  
Excuse me, Doctor McIntyre,  
For this intrusion upon your day.  
You are a man whose one desire  
Is knowledge, and for this you toil  
Without remission, that is plain.  
Now I'm a creature of the soil,  
A dreamer, who has paid with pain  
For dreams. We two are far apart:  
You verify your life with mind,  
And I am perjured by my heart,  
And search for what I never find.

MC INTYRE

The same with me.

KELSO

The same with you?

MC INTYRE

Surely. But what a joy to search—  
What is your business?

KELSO

In a sense

The same as yours.

MC INTYRE

Then not the church?

KELSO

Well, hardly. I seek evidence  
Of mind in nature, of a Power  
Around, above us. Seeking this  
I study men, as you a flower,  
Or stalk of cactus, the genesis  
Of species seek. I might presume  
To call myself a scientist:  
I study men from seed to bloom,  
And make notes like a botanist.  
Somehow my labors seem to irk,  
At least they fool and disappoint;  
While you are happy in your work,  
With nothing fretful out of joint.

MC INTYRE

Beyond the facts refrain to hope.

KELSO

Well, but you cannot get the facts  
If these late laws—

MC INTYRE

## The microscope

Despises legislative acts.  
Science demands no privilege;  
By bribes or torture she persuades  
No man to come to her, or hedge  
About convictions. Her crusades  
Are carried on with chemicals,  
With balances and instruments,  
In vigilant watches where such walls  
As these with thought's benevolence  
Win added proof to tentative  
Proof. And what happens in the world  
Of business with its take and give,  
Of war upon a people hurled,  
And mysticism that makes its proof  
Of what's unknown, and can't be known,  
Concern not science or her behoof.

KELSO

So you don't hear the country groan,  
Adventurous despite its strength,  
Beyond its judgment taking dares;  
And holding a hoped-for thing at length  
Something possessed? How plunged in cares,  
How prone to money and its affairs;  
How scorning rest it will not give  
Rest to others to love and live?



## MC INTYRE

Up in these mountains my hands are full  
With trees and cacti, as I observe  
How much the out-pull and in-pull  
Of plants are, proven by the curve  
Of lines made by the dendrograph.  
Mad men and nations will rise and sink,  
Meanwhile I neither rail nor laugh—  
I hope a little, work and think.  
Perhaps some day the mystic creed  
That spirit solely underlies  
A microbe, star, a stone, a weed,  
Or man, with which it deifies  
The universe, may win our eyes.  
Till then old Heraclitus' theme  
That souls and worlds evolved from fire  
Will be as credible a dream.  
Reason is finite, but separates  
What is from what is not, or kept  
Beyond our reason to inquire.

## KELSO

Yes, finite reason itself creates  
The finite—but spirits more adept  
Leap over and run infinity,  
Nor reason's limits will accept.  
Live things from things unorganized,  
And mind from life spawned on an earth  
Prepared for life, are spiritualized

Drama projected, given birth  
By Thought—I'll hazard that at least.  
From such a spot Olympian,  
Knowing how life achieved ascent  
To stalk from crystal, man from beast,  
I wonder not you look on man  
In statecraft as inconsequent.  
As for myself, compelled to crawl  
Amid corruption which overflows  
America, makes national  
Corruption, I must feel the throes  
Of soul defeat, when I recall  
What heroes of battle and of thought  
Struggled and died for a nation new;  
And hoped America, being wrought,  
Was something better, free and true.  
Look at it now: our judges bought,  
Our cabinets just the pliant tools  
Of the money power, and bribery  
Our national art—the people fools,  
Bribed just to let the bribers be  
Licensed the more to forge and thieve.  
Look at monopolies which control  
The bulk of what we reap and weave;  
Look at the few who own the coal,  
The copper, iron and the oil,  
The rivers and the water power;  
Look at the banks defrauding toil  
With bonds and paper. Look at us  
Hated by China, Mexico,

By Europe, we the usurious,  
The hoped-for light to light the world  
As Merchants of the Light become  
Mere hucksters with our banners furled,  
Or sold for steel, petroleum.  
Look at our spirit laughing down  
The ancient honor; see the camps  
Of farm and factory, field and town  
Made grabbers, slavers, thieves and scamps  
Look how no promise and no oath  
Commands respect, how hypocrites  
Are worshipped, and behold the growth  
And rulership of merchant wits.

MC INTYRE

This is manure out of which  
New Thought may rise, and new increase  
Of Man's dominion to enrich  
Some age to be—there is no peace.  
Meanwhile each man must do his part  
However wags the world.

KELSO

To miss

Your work, your path brings to the heart  
A sickness and paralysis,  
When age and folly both betray—  
Now I must be upon my way.

MC INTYRE

Where's that?

KELSO

To South America

I must be wandering on.

MC INTYRE

Good day.

KELSO

I thank you for this wonder hour.

Come, Cotton Tail! Where is the road

Where yonder mountain ranges lower?

INDIAN

I'll show you.

*(They go on.)*

MC INTYRE

Such a weary load

Comes of reflection, but no power

To act, from thought too long bestowed

On acres neither plowed nor sowed.

*Scene 8: Deck of a ship at a San Francisco pier. Baggage is being loaded, pier is crowded. Passengers are walking the deck, among whom is Ex-Judge Worthing, abstracted and carrying a black portmanteau. Abner Bobo is talking to Mrs. Sugg seated in deck chairs.*

BOBO

My name is Abner Bobo. Yours?

MRS. SUGG

I'm Mrs. Sugg.

BOBO

I'm glad to meet you.  
I want to introduce you to my wife  
As soon as I find her, just as sure as  
You are born. She will entreat you  
To take me lightly. She calls me naïf—  
French! I'll bet I've spent a bucket  
Of money on French. She had to learn.  
I'd gone clean broke if I hadn't struck it.  
My daughters wanted to read and gab.  
So I said, I don't give a dern,  
Go it and learn the a-b, ab.  
I hope you didn't mind the doff  
Of my hat and speaking?

MRS. SUGG

'Twas very nice.

BOBO

If my hat was on I'd take it off—  
Thanks kindly. Is your husband aboard?

MRS. SUGG

He's dead.

BOBO

Well! Well!

MRS. SUGG

Yes, I adored

My husband.

BOBO

That's the way to be.

My wife would holler if she lost me.

I hope he left you well provided.

MRS. SUGG

Oh, very well.

BOBO

So would I do.

What was his business?

MRS. SUGG

A store—cigars.

BOBO

Where was it?

MRS. SUGG

Near the avenue,

Off Sutter street.

BOBO

Well, bless my stars!

I've been in there a thousand times.

Sugg! I remember! Rather fat.

MRS. SUGG

Yes!

BOBO

Used to give the largest dime's  
Worth of tobacco, loved to chat.  
Life is so funny. You never know  
When you'll run into someone so.  
And that reminds me. Did you hear  
The story—

*(Seeing his wife.)*

There's my wife. Oh, dear!

Come here a bit and share my rug;  
I've met an old friend. Come and meet  
Our fellow traveler, Mrs. Sugg.

*(They shake hands.)*

Quit marching 'round now, take a seat.  
Yes, I was just a little way,  
A block or so from your husband's store.  
I used to see him 'most every day,  
But never missed him, or knew before  
That he was dead. But people's names  
I don't forget.

MRS. SUGG

What is your trade?

BOBO

Trade? Me? Designing picture frames.  
I run a store of highest grade—

It's art, I call it. You can guess  
I've made it prosper, otherwise  
Could hardly educate and dress  
My daughters and with fineries,  
And French the Missus please so much.  
So now we're off to take this trip  
Clear to New York, indulge our tastes  
In fine hotels, this splendid ship.  
Who is that man, I mean who wastes  
This happy time with walking so?  
Looks like he'd had a taste of woe;  
And carrying that black portmanteau.  
I've watched him till I'm growing blind.

MRS. BOBO

Why that's—I've heard it all—Judge Worthing,  
The Federal judge who just resigned.  
They say he has a giant mind.

BOBO

Kept some decrees tied to a string,  
So I have heard, is rich as cream,  
Proud as a peacock, but had to fling  
His robes judicial, so I heard,  
Or be impeached.

MRS. BOBO

That's just the word  
A woman told me just this minute.  
Abner, there's nothing you ever miss.



BOBO

The papers published all of this;  
I read the *Times* and all that's in it.  
But never saw the man till now.  
I keep from courts, have no attorney,  
Attend to business, and that's how  
I'm able now to take this journey.  
Look! What's he doing at the bow?  
He's fallen! What? They're running to him.  
Come, May!

*(Great confusion on the deck.)*

A MAN

He dropped his leather case!

ANOTHER MAN

I stood right here where I could view him.

ANOTHER MAN

Fell in the water there!

A WOMAN

Just look!

A boy jumped in—is swimming—diving.

BOBO

He's going to get it as I'm living.

A MAN

That boy some peril undertook;  
The water's cold here.

ANOTHER MAN (*looking at the dead judge*)

See his face  
Is purple, gray, the man is dead!  
Who is it?

MRS. BOBO

Judge Worthing.

A MAN

I knew him well.

A YOUNG MAN

I stood right by him when he fell.  
First he was walking fast, and quick  
He slowed his steps, perhaps felt sick.  
And then he reeled as if a swell  
Upheaved the boat. He grabbed the rail,  
And swung his leather case around,  
And threw it over.

A MAN

Dropped, you mean.

THE YOUNG MAN

Threw it, I mean. I couldn't fail  
To see what happened.

BOBO

I'll be bound.

(*The crowd is pressing around the dead body. Cap-*

*tain Cox rushes up. The boy who has rescued the portmanteau from the water comes on deck. It has opened and papers are sticking from it.)*

BOBO

Here, boy! I'll take it. Here's fifty cents.

*(He takes the portmanteau from the boy.)*

MRS. BOBO

What is it, Abner?

BOBO *(looking)*

Bonds and stocks,

Railway and mining in generous blocks.

MANY VOICES

The judge was guilty! That's why he quit!

An able man! A hypocrite!

CAPTAIN COX

Bear him to shore.

BOBO *(handing the captain the portmanteau)*

Here, Captain Cox,

Is his portmanteau with bonds and stocks,

A little wet, for he threw it over.

Where was he bound for, Captain?

CAPTAIN COX

Dover.

*(The crowd follows the body. In the confusion*

*Kelso boards the boat, carrying his satchel. In his haste he stumbles and falls. Bobo rushes over and helps Kelso to his feet.)*

BOBO

You almost fell. Ha! Ha! Your name?  
Mine's Bobo, here's my calling card.  
Did you hurt yourself?

KELSO

Myself to blame.

BOBO

A traveling man must be on guard.  
I didn't get your name.

KELSO

It's Hazzard—  
It's Hazzard Newman.

BOBO

I want to know!  
My wife once had a handsome beau  
Named Newman.

KELSO

No kin of mine, be sure.

BOBO

Where are you bound for?

KELSO

For New York,  
For Tophet, none of your business, sir.

BOBO

Your head is swelled.

KELSO

Your head is cork.

BOBO (*turning away*)

Hurrah! We're off. She starts to stir!  
See, May! She's moving like a stork.

## ACT FOUR

*Scene 1: Kelso is sitting as a night watch in an entrance room of A. Finkelstein & Company, New York. He is facing the alley door, which is locked; the windows are high up from the floor. He is now a very old man with white hair and beard which is long. He is reading, but sleep is overcoming him. A book of Plato is gradually slipping from his hands. It is about two in the morning. Many years have passed since he shipped around Cape Horn for New York.*

KELSO

Often I wondered along the way  
What age is. Now I fully know.  
It's stiffness, walking bent and slow;  
It's thinking thoughts you cannot say.  
A man when in his lusty day  
Goes noting, gabbing all he sees,  
And all he feels, but age cannot  
Find words, less still find similes.  
For what you were you have forgot,  
That you that lived at thirty dead.  
If there be life beyond the grave  
It will not keep its life on earth  
In memory, as from memory fled  
Is what it was before its birth  
When rocking in the natal womb.  
I wish that I had kept a diary

Of thoughts and feelings in the bloom  
Of manhood when my heart was fiery,  
In middle age when I divined  
With just a glance the human world,  
The secrets of my changing mind.  
Now all my leaves of sense are curled,  
My stalk goes lispig in the wind.  
One thing I know: when passion fails,  
When all forgot your Isabels,  
The half of life or more exhales  
Out of your soul; the miracles  
Of understanding fade as dew,  
And with it withers sympathy  
For what is beautiful and true,  
Your goodness, love. And this must be  
With dying bodies. And so with me.  
Not days of planning to build a house;  
Not days of happy toil to please  
Some loving children and a spouse;  
Not storing up for days of ease;  
Not at a future gazing rapt,  
But sitting here amid the dust,  
The litter and the boxes trapped,  
To earn a bed a scanty crust.  
Yet thankful that New Salem still  
Throws me a life-belt and a line  
Through its descendants. It were ill  
For me except for Finkelstein.  
What is the hour? It's only **two**!  
If it were five o'clock or dawn

What would it matter to Kelso who  
Just notes another day is gone?

*(He falls into a nap. The book drops to the floor  
from his lap. He wakes.)*

What, Plato fallen? Yes, fallen indeed.

The world now swarms a little breed.

*(There is a knock at the door. He opens it and takes  
the morning paper from a boy.)*

BOY

Your paper, Noah.

KELSO

You little cuss,

My name is old Prometheus.

*(He reads the paper.)*

Let's read now what the pulpit whacker

Said yesterday about disorder,

Women and whisky and terbacker,

Pool rooms, gambling and the border

Of Mexico, the Philippines;

Of missions and of prostitution;

How wonderful the Constitution;

How great is steel, how great machines;

How wise a man was Hamilton;

How cowardly was Jefferson;

How we will drift to anarchy

If once the Federal courts decline;

How we are prosperous being free,

And guided by the Hand Divine.

Here's Reverend Daniel Dicker: "Woe



To them that are at ease in Zion.”  
Of Amos he’s a worthy scion.  
He strikes at rich men not because  
They got their riches spite the laws,  
He hates to see them having fun.  
Here’s Reverend Ernest Shoemaker  
Who’s after every boxing bout.  
And Bishop Quigg the harbinger  
Of ruin if we don’t look out.  
Why do the papers print such stuff?  
It isn’t thought, it isn’t news.  
A preacher might be fond of booze  
And chase a scented powder puff,  
Yet preach a wisdom that would raise  
The people from the little days.  
But these inanities are the seep  
Which fouls the nation into sleep.  
Our cowardice, dishonesty,  
Our lying ethics, business strife,  
Our sneaking by philanthropy,  
Our bitter warring to the knife,  
Our righteousness which is a libel  
Upon a people just and free  
Are nourished on the Holy Bible.

*(The paper falls out of his hand. He sleeps. Two foremen enter.)*

FIRST FOREMAN

There’s old Methusalem again  
Gone sound asleep. A trusty watch!

SECOND FOREMAN

If I have caught him once it's ten  
Or twenty times. He is a botch.  
How did he get the job?

FIRST FOREMAN

Not mine  
The fault for hiring him. It seems  
He had a friend named Finkelstein  
In Illinois.

SECOND FOREMAN

He talks and dreams.

KELSO

Hurrah for Abe! Sew up their eyes!

FIRST FOREMAN (*shaking Kelso*)

Here! Was it for sleeping you were hired?  
Suppose we had been burglar guys?

KELSO

Sometimes I get a little tired.

FIRST FOREMAN

A long vacation then. You're fired.

(*Kelso walks out.*)

*Scene 2: A desolate tenement room. Kelso is sitting on a ragged bed, looking out of a high window over a crowded part of New York. Near the bed is his satchel.*

## KELSO

City! O City! For the old and poor  
How mighty rise your buildings, but how cruel!  
Are there glad hearts for many a bronzed door,  
To whom you flame and sparkle like a jewel?  
On many a night I heard the welling laughter  
Of boys and girls for whom the dawn's hereafter  
Was happiness, more life by sea or shore.  
But what of these in hovels, what for me?  
City of steel, of porcelain and granite  
With just the soul of those who build and man it,  
How bright, like vinegar without ferment  
Of freedom, happiness—how clear and sour;  
How with the spirit of the vanquished blent,  
How conquered by the forests and the power  
Of steam ripped quarries, and the under peril  
Of mines! How poisonous! But how tasteless, sterile!  
Great bloom of labor, and of gold and wrong,  
Where praised democracy is only rudeness,  
Indifference to merit; where the throng  
Laughs at disaster, tramples love and goodness;  
And where the server, porter and the driver  
Share in the rich man's hate, the social striver;  
And with the few who all the city own  
Rattle discordance in every quiet zone.  
Democracy! Where the pygmies in the name

Of man's equality the great pull down;  
And where the pompous purses mimic fame  
With little deeds raised to the day's renown.  
Great head of ruddy roofs and spiral hairs  
Wherein are hatched the programs and the lies  
Which rule the farthest desert, the country squares,  
The trade laws and the high moralities;  
Pursuing crime in dog fish, while the sharks  
Of monstrous capital, who join the chase  
To hide their thieving from the populace,  
Receive your praise as lofty oligarchs.  
I have heard the city singing while I perceived  
The staring of its gray and lidless eyes,  
How crystalline, how phosphorent, how wise!  
White star of—hope? In the forehead? Or the crown.  
The crown it is hiding a brow of scales,  
Shiny and corneous and silvery pearled,  
Gemmed with the richness of a tribute world,  
Dead jewels wrought with cunning workmanship:  
Jewel of love fastened in gold and vised  
Amid fine filigrees that grip  
Clear as the soul of Christ,  
But dead as He. And truth a chrysolite,  
Good will a ruby, freedom an emerald.  
No city's brow in all the world has held  
A crown so dazzling, on the hooded brow  
Whose rhythm is the neck's, that from below  
Sustains the head. Think of these things as specks  
On the wings of beauty! Never of the neck's  
Suspiring scales with colors thin and keen

Like blue lights of acetylene,  
Or violet flames that flicker a bed of coals.  
And if the head is wise, the neck is strong  
With the might of anciently traditioned souls:  
Fanged Metternich who visioned in the throne  
Stability for order for pride and gold;  
And Hamilton for whom the corner stone  
Of the state was property and assistance doled  
To those whom legal privilege does wrong.  
This neck is lithe and slick as an oily thong.  
I will no longer look. Disquietude,  
Grief for the age, anxiety and a purse  
That ached for emptiness have been my curse,  
And mildewed all my beauty and my good.  
So suffered those before me. Let me call  
Sweet spirits from their hiding my soul to heal.

Spirit of Beauty! Come! Arise! Appear!  
Bring back lost loveliness:  
Delighted eyes without a tear,  
Hands stretched in a caress;  
Wastes of green marshes bending to the river,  
Blue forests at the world's far edge;  
The flutter of great poppies, and the quiver  
Of leaves above a rocky ledge.  
Let me see slender moons above a stream,  
Or calm in skies that arch the tide  
Of seas that move out of a mystic dream,  
Foam, follow and divide.  
Imprisoned in the crystal palaces

Of life and of remembrance, lovely things  
Sleep until wakened by the magic kiss  
Of you, O Spirit, soul of deathless wings.

And you, O toad of ugliness which broods  
Beside the sleeping or the weary head,  
Ready to loose in crawling multitudes  
The shapes of Care and Dread,  
Sink to the waves of Phlegethon  
With all your slimy hosts:  
Love turned to hate, lust that is won,  
Pride with her boasts.  
The Lie's white countenance, the Self's  
Self-circled arms; and Malice  
That conjures from the air the Elf's  
Poison and poisoned chalice.  
Ingratitude that licks its lips,  
Grown strong on friendship's blood;  
Revenge with snakes for whips,  
Betrayal with her hood.  
All shapes dispel, O Beauty, that offend  
The creative heart, the mind  
That thirsts for you until the end,  
And trusts you if it find.

Come, Spirit of Creativeness,  
Wisdom and Love, the Light  
That lights the way, the dew that bless,  
Restore my sight.  
All temples and all woven sounds are yours;

Let furrowed thought still scar.  
You are the soul that, hunted, still endures,  
In song, the world, a star.  
The crackling froth of sour lament—  
If this be life—  
As railing is, and mad intent,  
And hate and strife,  
Use these, O Beauty, of them make  
Sweet out of brine;  
And from wild grapes in the thorny brake  
The living wine.  
Come, that my soul upon this reef  
Of earth, despite the grave  
May have the peace of great belief.  
Come, Beauty, come and save.

*(There is a knock at the door.)*

KELSO

Come in!

*(Another knock.)*

Come in, I said. Come in!

*(An old Civil War Veteran with a magazine in his hand enters.)*

VETERAN

Did I disturb your sleep last night?  
I almost coughed myself to death.

KELSO

What is it?

VETERAN

Well, my chest gets tight,  
A tickle makes me catch my breath.

KELSO

I didn't hear you.

VETERAN

Well, that's good.  
You won't be bothered long with me.  
I'm going down to Tennessee.  
I have a son there—

KELSO

So you should.  
These little rooms, the smoke and gas  
Would ruin windpipes made of brass.  
The mattresses are hard as boards;  
The counter stalest food affords.

VETERAN

I'm going back to die. I came  
To ask you what's "appurtenant."

KELSO

Annexed, belonging, like a claim.  
Why do you ask?

VETERAN

Because I can't  
Imagine how our island steals



Are not a part of us, and yet  
Belong to us. My epaulette  
Was worn to raise up Liberty  
In every place the flag might be.  
Now look at us.

KELSO

Just wheels and wheels.  
You're reading words that nothing mean.

VETERAN

An article in the magazine.

KELSO

That's ancient history, what you call  
An academic question now.  
The court just boxed the principle,  
And said the grab must be somehow.  
The Constitution makers planned  
Our future, surely meant that we  
Should take our flag beyond the sea;  
For otherwise we couldn't expand!  
It's like the snake that wired out,  
And wired in upon its track  
That left the looker-on in doubt  
Whether 'twas going or coming back.  
The hog, you see, belongs to Jack,  
Jack owns the hog because it's his.

VETERAN

What hog?

KELSO

Just any hog that is.  
My illustration of money tricks,  
Of property.

VETERAN

And good, I grant.  
But still what is "appurtenant"?  
The country's in an awful fix.  
I hear that down at Union Square  
Some speakers and some lunatics  
Will yell and foam and pull their hair  
This afternoon about that fellow  
Soon to be hanged who killed a cop  
For entering where the talk was yellow  
About the trusts and open shop.  
The murderer didn't talk at all;  
He owned and rented out the hall.  
The law now makes the owner pay  
For what his renters chance to say.  
I think I'll go. You come along.

KELSO

It's nothing but the old ding-dong.

VETERAN

It's fun to see so big a throng.  
(*He goes out. Kelso dresses himself.*)

*Scene 3: The pool room of Rufus Wilson, a negro. Pictures on the wall of Funston capturing Aguinaldo, and of war notables. A picture also of Wilson himself in a soldier's uniform standing with another soldier, Buddy Deans. Wilson is standing behind a cigar counter talking to another negro, Sam.*

SAM

When are you going to Illinois?

WILSON

Tomorrow.

SAM

Lived there as a boy?

WILSON

No, never. Didn't you hear me, Sam?  
I said it was my grandfather.

SAM

Your grandfather?

WILSON

By a river dam,  
Where a village was and a village stir.  
New Salem was its name. The tale  
Is this way, so my father said:  
This grandfather was picked for sale,  
A boy of ten. He up and fled,

And in the bushes hid. Now what  
Happened, you think?

SAM

I'll never guess.

WILSON

Along came Lincoln with a lot  
Of pork upon a flat boat going  
Down to New Orleans, this Rufus saw,  
I'm named for him—and shoreward rowing  
Took him on board in spite of law,  
And turned him over to a friend  
Named Jack Kelso. I want to see  
The place, New Salem, where began  
The story of our being free;  
And Lincoln's monument not far  
From this New Salem. If he can  
My side kick in the Philippines  
Is going with me in my car.

SAM

Who is your side kick?

WILSON

Buddy Deans.

There is his picture on the wall,  
With me beside him.

SAM

Who is this?

WILSON

A fellow whom a cannibal,  
A Moro devil with the hiss  
Of a poisoned arrow almost killed.  
We saved him, Buddy Deans and I.  
That fellow hollered till it filled  
The whole camp with his crazy cry.  
He went clear crazy from the wound.  
The captain asked for volunteers  
To take the fellow gagged and bound  
Up to the hospital at Manila,  
Right up the river past the spears  
Of jungles, villa after villa  
Of enemies. And amid the cheers  
This Buddy Deans and I stepped out.  
We got a boat, we gagged him good—

SAM

What for?

WILSON

So that he couldn't shout,  
And wake the Malays in the wood  
To shoot at us. We bound him tight  
So that he couldn't jump and leap.  
We only traveled in the night,  
Quietly dipping oar on oar.

SAM

When did you sleep?

WILSON

We didn't sleep.  
Before the sky was growing light  
We chained the boat against the shore,  
And tied him on the ground; but we  
Stood watching in some leafy tree,  
No sleep at all. When it was dark  
We'd load him in again, embark;  
And in the heat along that stream  
As awful as a crazy dream  
We'd dip the oars past forest glooms,  
Through logs and weeds and river brush,  
And scent of snakes and poison blooms;  
And monkeys with their piercing chatter  
Would wake the jungle's blanket hush.  
Sometimes a river thing or rat or  
Snake would make a water thread  
Around the boat or just ahead.

SAM

You didn't have an accident?

WILSON

We sat beneath a rattan top.  
And once we saw an arrow drop  
Close in the water. Then others spent  
Their force against the canopy:  
Tip! Tip! Tip! Tip! or else a swish  
Beneath the oars. Another fell,

After it almost hit my knee,  
Right in the boat. 'Twas devilish.  
And when we passed them what a yell  
The jungle sent! A bevy then  
Took after us in boats. And quick  
I blazed away and made them sick.  
I think I laid out eight or ten.  
And one got out and tried to swim;  
You bet I made short work of him.  
One day a monster wrapping snake  
Lying around a giant limb  
Of a tree I climbed to made me shake.  
I had a fight the snake to kill  
Using a hunting knife. At last  
Half dead we reached Manila where  
The man seemed growing sicker still.  
And so we drove on pretty fast  
To the hospital; a weary pair  
Were Buddy Deans and I. Next day  
We woke to find the city gay.  
Funston had captured the rebel chief,  
Aguinaldo, and made him swear  
Fidelity to the law and flag,  
And all the country breathed relief,  
And we went on a roaring jag.

*(Kelso enters, carrying his satchel.)*

KELSO

A little tobacco, if you please.

WILSON

What kind?

KELSO

The cheapest that you sell,  
To smoke and chew.

WILSON

How's Old Navy's?

KELSO

I don't like Navy's very well.  
Have you cigar scraps?

WILSON

Had, but gone.

KELSO

Then Navy's. Five cents?

WILSON

It's a dime.

KELSO

I'll have the change some other time.

WILSON

All right, grandfather. Now move on!

*Scene 4: Union Square, New York. Thousands of people have gathered to protest against the hanging of*



*the owner of the meeting hall. In the crowd are many policemen, state troopers wearing belts filled with cartridges. There is the hum of many voices. The speaking has not yet begun. There is a platform in the center of the crowd. Around the Square are billboards heralding the drama "Hephaistos" at a large theatre.*

## FIRST YOUNG MAN

I hope I'll suffer a thousand hells  
If ever I change my principles.  
I've sworn to serve mankind and be  
In life and death for Liberty.

## SECOND YOUNG MAN

And so have I. Eternal shame  
On those who wither by the way!  
Take Rubel! Why, he used to flame  
With ardor, used to spout and say  
That heroes always disobey.  
He used to carry the flag of red,  
And at the column walk ahead.  
Now he is rich, at clubs received.  
It fills me with supreme disgust,  
Now he's attorney for a trust.  
The papers make him daily news,  
All with his picture and his views  
On how success may be achieved.

## FIRST YOUNG MAN

But Rubel isn't half as slick  
As Charley Daniels, who adheres,  
Or seems to many men to stick  
To what he preached in former years.  
He really has a serpent wit.  
You can't call him a hypocrite.  
No cause he ever seems to join,  
Yet somehow he absorbs the coin  
Of every movement radical.  
Meanwhile he laughs at all of them,  
And cuts them with satirical  
Analysis, or apothegm,  
And like a bubble of mercury,  
Faster than any eye can see  
He glides from sawdust on the floor  
To bankers' banquets and palace door.  
And did you notice when they caught him  
At jury bribing years ago  
How not a single magnate fought him;  
He was too useful to treat so.  
But yet it seems he never betrayed  
A cause for which one cares a whit.

## SECOND YOUNG MAN

But I have known him just to quit.

## FIRST YOUNG MAN

Well, yes! He might have been afraid.

He's good at business, he has eyes  
For that old treachery compromise.

SECOND YOUNG MAN

But what of Linstrom do you think?

FIRST YOUNG MAN

Linstrom?

SECOND YOUNG MAN

The poet.

FIRST YOUNG MAN

Has he failed?

SECOND YOUNG MAN

He started out to sing of labor,  
And mourn for fellows who were jailed,  
And curse the bayonet and sabre.  
They cut his hair off at the start:  
The critics said it wasn't art.  
The wealthy women got his goat,  
And won him. Now he dines at eight,  
And drinks wine in a dinner coat,  
Then to his study to cogitate,  
And write songs from a faith inert  
On Lincoln—whatever doesn't hurt  
Privilege, money—too sedate  
In public now to tear his shirt.

*(Kelso arrives at the edge of the crowd. He sees  
the bill-boards that herald "Hephaistos.")*

KELSO

I should have written that. No man  
Could write that as I could and can.

*(He enters the crowd.)*

THE CHAIRMAN *(taking the platform)*

Comrades!

A TROOPER

Shut up. There will not be  
A meeting here.

A VOICE

Why not?

ANOTHER VOICE

We'll see!

A MAN *(raising a flag)*

We fought the war. This is our flag!

TROOPER

Don't desecrate it, then, or drag  
Its sacred colors.

THE MAN

It makes us free.

TROOPER *(pointing to his cartridge belt)*

No! I do. I'm your Liberty.

*(He seizes the flag.)*

On freedom's cross I mean to nail  
The hands of every anarchist,  
Seditionary, atheist,  
And let their bodies hang to warn  
The generations yet unborn,  
For vulture beaks and raven claws  
To pick putrescence from their jaws;  
I mean to teach the snake and clod  
That there are government and God.

FIRST YOUNG MAN

Well, crucifixions always prove  
Those propositions.

SECOND YOUNG MAN

God is love.  
His metaphor is all askew  
Referring to the martyred Jew.

A MAN

So this is now America!

A POLICEMAN

Shut up or I will break your jaw.

*(Kelso appears in another part of the crowd, carrying his satchel.)*

A POLICEMAN

That old man yonder has a bomb!

A BYSTANDER

I think more likely a pom-pom.

## THE POLICEMAN

You come with me!

*(The crowd cheers.)*

ANOTHER POLICEMAN *(to Kelso)*

What's in that satchel?

KELSO

I've got it as a kind of catch-all  
For what I own.

POLICEMAN

Well, senator,

We'll open it.

*(Many people in the crowd draw back and away in  
fright.)*

MANY VOICES

It might explode!

Look out! Let me get out of here!

He's got a bomb! He's crazy! Queer!

He's got it open! The fuse is slowed!

Stand back! It really might explode!

*(The policeman has brought forth a few articles of  
old clothing and a photograph of Lincoln. The  
crowd cheers loudly.)*

KELSO

Now is that all? You'd better con  
The Lincoln photograph.

THE POLICEMAN (*closing the satchel and handing it back to Kelso*)

Move on!

(*Kelso comes near the platform followed by the policeman. He says something to the state trooper, hands his satchel to the old man of the tenement and mounts the platform. The crowd cheers.*)

MANY VOICES

Good for you, Father Time! Give 'em hell!  
Down with the trusts! Down with imperialism!

KELSO (*raising his hands for silence*)

Friends! Soldiers! Marshals! Guardians of the  
Law!

Lend me your ears! And hear me for my cause.  
I come to bury freedom, not to praise it,  
If anything be buried here or praised.  
The man you mourn had will to keep the law,  
Or break the law. So have each one of you.  
He chose to break it. Therefore, if you say  
The law itself was tyrannous and wrong  
That made a crime of renting out his hall,  
Yet do you say such wrong was made a right  
By killing a policeman without choice  
Except to execute the law as made?  
Is this the way to work the law's repeal?

MANY VOICES

You're rotten! Let him speak! What does he mean?

## THE TROOPER

Go on, old man!

KELSO

What is a radical?

A radical is one who swings the ax,  
And fells the tree by severing the roots.  
But where there is one man with fitting brawn  
To wield the ax, there are a million weaklings  
Busy with penknives, or a few with barlows,  
And, doing nothing, are themselves despised  
And kicked about for whittling and for talk.  
With every Emerson who's born to think,  
Are spawned some millions who can barely quote,  
Nor understand, nor act the word he said.  
Freedom may vanish from the breast of man  
As well as light be blotted from the sun,  
But there are sun spots, there are tyrant days,  
While radicals go whittling. Some are cowards  
Who fear the tree will fall and crush their heads.  
So whittling prospers. Otherwise expressed,  
You vote to give new vigor to the tree.  
You always do so. And by what persuasion?  
For jobs, for dinner pails, the country's honor.  
And since you sneer the argument that law  
Must be enforced until it be repealed,  
Sneer at yourselves for voting so the law  
May be enacted as your vote implies,  
Respect it till you change your vote.



A VOICE

That's good!

KELSO

Policemen! Soldiers! Constables! A word  
To praise your courage and your vigilance—

MANY VOICES

What is he saying? What is this about?

KELSO

Pledged to the common good, to property,  
To God and order. You are iron men,  
Brave in the peril of these days. But why  
Harbor a fear for labor halls, for crowds  
Assembled as this crowd is? I protest  
By the most holy words of bravery,  
And in the names of thousands who upheld  
Our flag in tropic climes, and died to spread  
Our liberty in the Orient, to the seas  
That wash the green Antilles. Have no fear,  
You who are guardians of the law. A mouse  
May fright an elephant. But you whose minds  
So much surpass the elephant's as his  
Huge bulk exceeds the strength of yours should eye  
The mouse in calmness, eat your hay in peace.

THE TROOPER

Tone down a little. Time is nearly up.

KELSO

What I would say of radicals is this:  
A few are brave—

MANY VOICES

Oh, no!

KELSO

But most are cowards.

MANY VOICES

Don't let him speak.

THE TROOPER

I am his liberty.

KELSO

A few are honest—

MANY VOICES

Shame! For shame, old man!

KELSO

But most are crooks.

MANY VOICES

You stop! Tear down the platform!

KELSO

A few are thrifty and industrious.  
But most, just like the charge against the trusts,

Live on the sweating millions—just to talk.  
And some have brains, and programs and a way.  
But most have solved perpetual motion's secret,  
And geared the great contraption to their mouths.

## SOLDIERS AND POLICEMAN

Ha! Ha! Go on! Who is that Solomon?

## KELSO

So now you cheer me. You, who are so brave,  
Who fear a revolution. Don't you know  
There's not enough in all America  
Of wit and nerve to take a peanut stand?  
There's nothing you could do to make this land,  
Whether on farms or in the cities' squares,  
Resort to revolution. Think a bit:  
You take away their beer, they turn to swill!  
You take away tobacco—mullein leaves!  
The Methodists and Baptists throttle thought  
And put a gag on wisdom's mouth—they laugh!  
The land is like a cell of porcelain,  
Clean but a prison, joyless as a church;  
They run from place to place to dodge the law,  
Like rats which die from strychnine, mad with thirst.  
Let the poor fools, the radicals, alone.  
The body of the people stands with you,  
Soldiers, Policemen, Guardians of the Law;  
For finally you take away their freedom  
To assemble here—

THE TROOPER

Come down, that is enough!

KELSO

But I avoid you, tell you what I think!

MANY VOICES

You're crazy! Too old to kill! He is a fool!

*(Kelso leaves the platform.)*

THE TROOPER

What shall I do with you, old man?

A POLICEMAN

Oh, let him alone, let him be gone.

THE TROOPER

At least he should be given the pan.

THE POLICEMAN

That is enough for him. Move on!

*(Kelso hides in the crowd, and as it disperses he disappears.)*

*Scene 5: In front of a cathedral. Kelso is leaning against one of the columns of the entrance, listening to a conversation between a Methodist and a Baptist. In the cathedral the mass is being celebrated. Now and then the organ can be heard.*

## METHODIST

The unity of Christendom  
Is something that is bound to come.  
But first for a successful presage  
Of something vital, not a wraith,  
We need to have a common message  
That speaks for all a common faith;  
Which is in brief the truth applied  
Of Christ, the Saviour crucified;  
And blood that through mysterious grace  
The stains of sinners can efface.

## BAPTIST

Baptism!

## METHODIST

Yes, but as a rite  
That makes the man incorporate  
With some church, let the man unite  
With any. He must celebrate  
Communion as the signal act  
Of corporate worship by the church.  
There must be liberty to search  
The Scriptures as to sacraments,  
And order ministerial,  
And grace and priestly eminence  
Without a fault schismatical.  
Provision also must be made  
The craft of Satan well to sift,  
While leaving men of every shade

Freely to use the prophetic gift.  
No propaganda competitive;  
Live while letting the others live.  
And at the Lord's communion table  
Let all God's children cease their Babel.

KELSO (*listening*)

So does an oriental fable  
About a Jewish carpenter  
The city and the village stir.  
The world is mad, or I am mad.

BAPTIST

We Protestants would all be glad  
To have all Christians so united;  
And make the compact ironclad  
By having Catholics.

METHODIST

Yes, delighted.  
The Saviour is our elder brother,  
And we are brothers. To oversee them  
Is not to fight with one another  
Either to win them or to curb them.

(*The organ peals from the cathedral. Kelso goes in  
and takes a seat.*)

THE PRIEST (*at the altar*)

*In principio erat Verbum,  
Et Verbum erat apud Deum,  
Et Deus erat Verbum*

*Hoc erat in principio apud Deum.  
Omnia per ipsum facta sunt  
Et sine ipso factum est  
Nihil quod factum est:  
In ipso vita erat,  
Et vita erat lux hominum;  
Et lux in tenebris lucet,  
Et tenebrae eam non comprehenderunt.*

KELSO (*to a woman neighbor*)

What does that mean, my friend, which we've  
In Latin from the altar heard?

THE WOMAN

In the beginning was the Word.

KELSO

Ah, that is something I believe,  
A mystery that I conceive.  
This church that took the ancient art  
Of Greece's, Egypt's sound and form  
Entered with beauty the human heart  
To keep its adorations warm.  
Theology plain is barren and dull,  
And misses the only God that's known;  
The good is also the beautiful,  
And that's your church's cornerstone.

THE WOMAN

You didn't genuflect beside  
The seat when entering; go before

The image of Christ crucified  
There close beside the entrance door,  
Fall to your knees.

KELSO

As mystical,  
Symbolic reverence of the soul  
So tortured in this tragical  
Life without meaning or a goal  
I may.

THE WOMAN (*praying*)

O Lord, eternal rest!

THE PRIEST

*Et Verbum caro factum est.*

(*Kelso stops before the image of Christ.*)

KELSO

Millions of souls have suffered too  
The pain, the scorn as much as you;  
Poverty, shame, the hoots and jeers—  
But you had never the pent-up tears,  
The great fatigue of lengthened years.  
You never had but a moment's doubt;  
And that was when your life went out.  
But I, and countless spirits like me,  
Have wondered when the Fiend would strike me,  
And all the while no truth could find  
To still the heart, convince the mind.



And that through youth to feeble age,  
Through grief which nothing could assuage;  
While knowing that the open grave  
Abode the doubter and the brave.  
How did your anguish profit me?  
How does your wounded body save,  
Or render less my tragedy?  
You knew immortal life awaited  
Your death by nails and soldiers fated;  
But if such life be ever mine  
Your mission and your work divine  
Have never to my eyes revealed.  
Ah! had they done so I had kneeled  
Before your image glad and fain;  
But as it is I bow my head  
For Earth bewildered, never healed,  
O Man of Sorrow, Son of Pain!  
*(He goes from the church and stands wearily by a  
bank corner looking west.)*

## KELSO

Old Salem witches, New Salem greed,  
What are they but the selfsame breed?  
That sun that's westerling seems to light  
A pathway back to Illinois.  
For one so old, in such a plight,  
How could I better the time employ  
Than walking thither? I shall see  
Old scenes again, old ties renew,  
Have country hospitality.

My fingers tingle through and through  
For thinking of the hand clasps warm.  
I shall inhale a purer breath,  
Cease there to think so much of death,  
Find there a strong and hearty arm  
For this old frame to lean upon.

A POLICEMAN

Don't stand here by this bank. Move on!

KELSO

Is there no rest place, no café  
Like those of Rio and Recife  
Which I saw in a happier day,  
Such as I hear in Europe thrive  
Where people sit and have a drink,  
Hear music, read the papers, think  
Under an awning, over the walk  
Where sunlight is and happy talk?  
My nerves are shaking, as a sign  
Of age which needs a glass of wine.

THE POLICEMAN

Go to the park.

KELSO

There's nothing there.

THE POLICEMAN

That may be, but there's nothing else,

Except some thousands of hotels.  
Go get a room.

KELSO

And sit alone?

THE POLICEMAN

A man should when he wants to moan.

KELSO

The time has come for my farewells  
To this despair of steel and stone.

*(He walks west, carrying his satchel. Coming before a bronze statue of Lincoln, he apostrophizes.)*

KELSO

Abe Lincoln of New Salem. Mighty in bronze!  
The woodsman, freedom lover, friend of labor,  
Often I saw you along the Sangamon's  
Valleys and hills with many a humble neighbor.  
So self-possessed, so calm, so slow, so eyed  
For seeing life and earth devoid of glamour—  
Surely I did not know you in your pride  
That scorned all envy, and despised the clamour  
Of idealists who took you for their own.  
By them you were mistaken as I mistook you.  
Cold reason you were and kindred to the stone,  
And bronze—how could I thus so overlook you?  
The patient strength determined ever to rise;  
The shame for parentage and early training;

The hunger for esteem, the thought that vies  
With all the world's, and bides its own unstraining.  
Never in farthest fancies did you dream  
When we two wandered, fished and read together  
That you in bronze would look upon a scheme  
Of steel and stone, war's creature from its nether  
Foundations to its towers that rise and task  
This city and this nation, O Son of Iron,  
And scion of the hand-forge—you the mask  
Of the Age of Steel, whose meshes now environ  
All liberty, all grace, so fastly snared.  
The central sovereignty which you declared  
Above the land, created by the states,  
But by some magic potion made their master,  
Has bred this soulless monster and these hates  
Whose hope is ever Liberty's disaster.  
Blossom of blasts, and natural to the bud  
As consequence, and if by you unseen  
Others foresaw it dripping human blood,  
Want, misery upon this virgin scene,  
As in the despot monarchies of old.  
Power filched is filched, even if filched to force  
A liberty will soon be turned to gold  
And tyranny, the theft points to the course  
Where lust may run by justice uncontrolled.  
Such high nobility was yours, such will  
For the right, the good, I grieve you did not see  
America captured by the mendicant mill,  
Where trade is privileged and is not free.  
Now there you stand in bronze, a myth adored;

Freedom's Apostle truly, who meant to save,  
Now used by jobbers, by the exploiting sword  
To slave the free with what you freed the slave.  
All leagues of peace, and manhood rights will fail;  
Wars will arise to wear the masquerade  
Of Liberty, but no Liberty will prevail  
Until the whole world blossoms with free trade.  
*(He walks west, going to Illinois.)*

## ACT FIVE

*Scene 1: In front of the Capitol at Washington. Two robbers are standing somewhat apart from the crowd which has gathered to see the procession of speakers and dignitaries who are on their way to dedicate a monument to an unknown soldier.*

FIRST ROBBER

Where are you going to from here?

SECOND ROBBER

I know a bank that can be tapped.

FIRST ROBBER

What are the chances? Is it near?

SECOND ROBBER

Yes, and my get-away is mapped.  
What's more I mean to cache the swag.  
We fellows waste our money so.  
Two months ago my money bag  
Had several thousand bones to blow.  
But how we fellows spend and lend  
Until we hardly have a rag  
Is foolish, when we might be penned,  
Or stretch a noose's slack and sag.  
After this next haul I intend  
To wrap the booty in the flag.

## FIRST ROBBER

That's common sense. Take me along,  
I am a yegg, too, quick and strong.  
Since my poor father lost his land  
This is a way to right the wrong.

## SECOND ROBBER

What was it?

## FIRST ROBBER

Just a robber band.  
Oil underlay it, and this crowd  
Which soon in limousines will pass  
Tangled him up, and had him cowed  
With lawyers, costs and poison gas  
Like threats, until he never slept  
Without the fear he wouldn't awake.  
So with such tactics daily kept  
They ousted him and got the stake.  
The war came then, I volunteered,  
But didn't get to go across.

## SECOND ROBBER

You see this eye? A little bleared!  
I chuckled when it interfered,  
And saved me from a total loss.  
There's many like me where I lived  
In West Virginia in the mines;  
That's where your slavery has arrived.  
The owners and the railroad lines

Unite or wrangle about the price  
Of coal, but all the while they hold  
The miners, people in a vise.  
A few years back there was a strike;  
They drove the miners to the cold.  
The owners know the way to spike  
The union guns. The courts are theirs,  
The courts enjoin the miners, so  
The miners with their wives and heirs  
Find freedom hungry in the snow.  
This is your proletariat.  
I ran away and robbed a bank,  
One of the company's, too, at that.  
You should have seen the cashier plank  
The money when he saw the gat.  
But listen, partner, what's the good  
Of talking of the wronged and poor?  
I know a secret if you would  
Keep it I'd tell you.

FIRST ROBBER

Tell me! Sure!

SECOND ROBBER

I know the unknown soldier's name,  
And I know where he lived, and what  
Made him so reckless, full of shame  
He wanted to die and be forgot.  
He was a fellow of my town;  
He loved a girl who jilted him  
When he was on a strike and down;



The war came then, and he was grim.  
He went to France—but wrote the girl;  
She didn't answer for a whim,  
Which kept his anger in a whirl.  
His buddy told me this: One day  
The mail came and the dug-out rang;  
The soldiers mired in flooded clay  
Grabbed for the letters, howled and sang.  
This unknown soldier all the while  
Worked away at a cartridge shell,  
Making a ring with knife and file,  
While others read their letters. Well,  
He got the ring done, slipped it on  
His finger when his buddy passed  
A letter to him, whereupon  
He choked just like a fellow gassed;  
He choked and paled, you see he thought  
His girl had written him, instead  
His lodge had dropped him! So he fought  
At daybreak, and they found him dead—  
This buddy did, and knew him by  
The cartridge ring, which he removed.  
He didn't tell, but kept his eye  
Upon the body, helped to spade  
The grave, and dug him up with care  
To be the sport of this parade—  
All of this story can be proved.

## FIRST ROBBER

What was the soldier's name?

## SECOND ROBBER

Look there!

They're coming! Look at those who lead!  
Here are the troops who guard and save  
The swollen paunches, the heavy kneed,  
The heirs of those who freed the slave.  
Here come the orators, diplomats;  
Around the President how they shine!  
This is the carnival of silk hats  
Who rule the factory and the mine.  
These are the weasels, wolves and swine,  
Our rulers, these the plutocrats,  
Honorable men of sugar and steel  
Who pick the President for the states,  
For Porto Rico, and the weal  
Of islands and the syndicates.  
They choose him for his fawning thumb  
Obeying them the button to press  
For tariffs on petroleum,  
And steel, for profits never less.  
These are the advertisers who  
Permit, forbid what goes in print;  
Who gorge the country's revenue,  
And own the banks, and run the mint.  
Honorable men! Look how they blink,  
The hog-eyed, and the python-eyed;  
They've made the whole republic stink,  
For which the unknown soldier died!  
Look at that preacher there who sits

Beside the crime commission's head!  
What is to do but use our wits  
Against such devils for our bread?

FIRST ROBBER

Here comes the hearse! What makes you cry?

SECOND ROBBER

Take off your hat!

FIRST ROBBER

For him? I will.

Who was he?

SECOND ROBBER

Just my brother. I  
Would like to make them foot the bill.  
That's all now. Come! I want to buy  
Some fuses, powder and a drill.

*(They go on. Then appear a guide and a group of  
people being shown about the Capitol and the  
grounds.)*

GUIDE

From here you may behold the west  
Façade of the Nation's Capitol,  
Which fronts the gardens and the Mall;  
Where bronze and marble have expressed  
The spirit of the laws and land,

Triumphant now on every hand.  
Rightly Chief Justice Marshall heads  
The vista, whose decisions gave  
The logic, tearing into shreds  
The rights of states, and phrased to save  
The Union and its Covenant.  
Hence, there across the way the brave,  
The martial sculpture raised to Grant  
Is fitting, since he drew the sword  
For Marshall, making dominant  
The Nation, and its courts restored.  
Beyond, the shaft of adamant  
To Washington bespeaks the man  
Who won our independence, framed  
The Union; while afar you scan  
The Grecian temple, almost done,  
For him, so justly now acclaimed  
Our saviour, first American.

## FIRST TOURIST

Where is the bronze to Jefferson?

## GUIDE

I'll tell you. Come!

*(They go to the east front of the Capitol.)*

These are the famed  
East steps and portico and front.  
The Fathers loved the East, and dreamed  
The land which bore the battle's brunt  
Would rule, and so should be esteemed.

They thought the city eastward there  
Would grow. Instead to North and West  
It spread.

FIRST TOURIST

What is this central square?

GUIDE

All things in order, I suggest.  
First, here's the Capitol's cornerstone—  
Right here! By Washington was laid—

SECOND TOURIST

Oh! Then it was not overthrown  
By English torches, cannonade?

GUIDE

No! Cockburn only piled the rooms  
With broken chairs and barrels of tar,  
And paintings, books for hecatombs,  
And made the floors and ceilings char.

FIRST TOURIST

That's when the White House, too, was burned:

GUIDE

All but the walls—

FIRST TOURIST

This square below  
The eastern steps?—

## GUIDE

You seem concerned !  
Perhaps, my worthy friend, you know  
About the man named Levy, who  
To Congress gave a bronze full size  
Of Jefferson. Well, it was due  
This very square to harmonize.  
But there was hindrance. What, who knows?  
'Twas secret and political.  
They didn't place it here, instead  
Upon the White House lawn it rose ;  
Later in Statuary Hall  
They set it.

## FIRST TOURIST

With the average dead.  
With Tyler, and with Lewis Cass,  
With Garfield and Lucretia Mott,  
And Frances Willard, in the class  
With Houston, Benton, half forgot,  
And headed for oblivion.

## GUIDE

Well, in a way. But I'll explain—

## FIRST TOURIST

The land befouls its natal strain  
Which hides the face of Jefferson.

## GUIDE

The country little comprehends  
This Capital, which the eagle took

For symbol and for sovereign ends,  
The beaked bird with the regal look.  
The army, navy, courts and gold,  
And honor at its inner core  
Are dominant, and have controlled  
The Nation's spirit more and more—

## FIRST TOURIST

Grown now what Jefferson foretold.  
Such Hessians trample or ignore  
The faith of freedom which he scrolled.

(*They go on.*)

*Scene 2: Kelso is passing through a city in Illinois, which is roaring with wheels and hammers, blasts, and the crunching of great rollers. The almost countless smokestacks of the steel mills stand against a gas-hazed sky. From some of these flames are leaping. Acres of ground fenced by barbed wire strung to iron posts and protected by barbs along the top to prevent its being scaled, are occupied by monstrous grimed buildings of iron and brick. The air is full of smoke, dust and gas.*

## KELSO

So now the workshop of Hephaistos,  
His anvils and his twenty bellows,  
His cyclopes one-eyed and boisterous,  
Who fashioned bulls of iron and fellows  
For armored chariots, helmets made  
For soldiers, has enlarged to this—

The artist perishes with trade.  
And with increase of breast and neck,  
And hairy shoulders he has become  
A Plutus blind, a devil dumb  
Resolved to govern, or to wreck.  
Where the lame blacksmith of Olympus  
Once meshed in iron Aphrodite,  
Now every good will by this mighty  
Monster is throttled. And behold  
His workmen, and the land! To skimp us,  
And rule us, ever with laws and plots  
He hammers, and with patriots,  
With devotees of God and truth  
He fellows, and his furnaces  
Pour gold from cunning and from youth—  
He calls it progress and success!  
The palace of the Olympian god  
Where handicraft made swords and cars  
Was studded with imperishable stars.  
Now fiery serpents in rail and rod,  
And girders glide the granite floor;  
And tons of metal in crucibles,  
And sparks as from a thousand hells,  
From blasts and from the giant blower  
Make light. And every one-eyed smith,  
Still one-eyed has been graduated  
To office windows, the lesser kith  
Of Steel the god, the subjugated  
Mannikins to watch and drive,  
And see that stocks and earnings thrive.



Yet would I bring the hand forge back,  
Would I restore the simple days?  
Never, for progress has my praise.  
I only curse the demoniac  
Spirit of commerce and its ways.

*(Inside the barbed wire fence hundreds of men are standing in line with envelopes in their hands. One by one they reach a cashier's window, where the envelopes are handed the cashier, who gives money to the workmen. Many corporation policemen with large billets, and pistols bulging in their pockets stand at intervals along the line, saying, Hurry up, Move up. Some feet away from the window in the line is a man of about sixty, grizzled and weary, carrying his envelope.)*

POLICEMAN *(to this man)*

Let's see your envelope.

MAN

For what?

It's mine.

POLICEMAN

You heard me what I said.

MAN

The envelope is mine.

POLICEMAN *(raining blows upon his head with the billet and knocking him unconscious)*

You sot!

## VOICES

He killed him! What's the matter? Look!  
His mouth is bleeding! See it twitch!

## POLICEMAN

He called me here a son of a bitch.  
Carry him over by the fence.  
Go get the office lawyer. You,  
And you and you are evidence;  
You heard him call me that. A few  
Statements will answer for defense.

*(They carry the injured man away, and some little  
time later out of the guarded gate into the street  
of the town. Kelso is standing by the gate.)*

## KELSO

What is the matter? Is he dead?

## A WORKMAN

Well, pretty near. His skull is cracked.

## KELSO

What happened?

## A WORKMAN

He fell off a shed.

## KELSO

Poor devil! How his eyes are blacked;  
How livid is his face and drawn!

A POLICEMAN (*to Kelso*)

This is the company's street. Move on.

(*Kelso walks away.*)

*Scene 3: A small town near the New Salem Hill. It is Sunday. Kelso is resting in a little park. There is a soldier's monument in the center of it.*

KELSO

Is it the world, the man himself  
That strips him of his being's growth,  
And takes his spirit and his pelf,  
And mocks his nakedness? It's both!  
What I have done myself to wreck  
I shoulder with a bloody neck.  
But what I curse is after they do  
So much to make you faint and fail  
They turn about and blame it on you  
For stumbling in the ditch or jail,  
Although your feet were evil tripped.  
Many a failure blamed for drink  
Came when the fellow had been stripped  
Of strength to work, and mind to think;  
And what mankind calls God or Fate  
Is public opinion, the neighborhood  
Invoking justice, but following hate.  
Happy the man who keeps it clear  
Which was at fault, and which subdued:  
His deeds, or those who stood to jeer,

And tried to down him year by year.  
Let me recount the catalogue  
Of losses in this jungle world,  
Where snake eats snake, and dog eats dog.  
They take your humor and your laugh;  
They take your self-respect, your vision;  
They take your will, a walking staff;  
They shut your honor up in prison;  
They take your money, that is first;  
With hunger all your virtues waver.  
Who take? The game of life accursed,  
Where you must truckle to some slaver,  
Or keep on fighting, ever braver.  
Beauty and Love are first to fade,  
And at the last the thinking mind.  
No! Beauty hovers, and we trade  
For passion, love of humankind.  
Myself of all in life bereft  
Hold up my head with courage left.  
For years so lonely and alone  
In spirit nothing but skin and bone,  
Like a starving man on his own fat  
Living I've nourished and nourish still  
My being upon my courage and will;  
For food a crust, for couch a slat.  
Self to extinguish is the thing;  
Let my flame mingle with the sun's.  
I've lived, I've loved, an underling  
Like millions after millions.  
What I must do now is to choose

My grave where never a man can find it,  
Just as my uncle did—no yews,  
No stone, but meadow grass to blind it  
To curious eyes. I want to glide  
Unseen toward the veil, behind it,  
And vanish as if I'd never died.  
My heart locked up, and lost the key,  
Let never a mortal grieve for me.

*(He sees the soldiers' monument.)*

As everywhere from sea to sea  
A monument in this little town!  
From coast to coast is such renown  
Given to soldiers who have grasped  
For usurers, bribers, gougers, thieves,  
And those who widen the hem of their sleeves,  
And hide behind them, keep the hasped  
Book of history. When will there be  
More bronze for thinkers, conquerors  
Of ugliness, disease, and hate?  
There are so many kinds of wars.  
What is the city, what the state?  
Are houses, churches, granite fields?  
Is the state the governor who wields  
Power for a year, the magistrate?  
No! but the hope of men with whom  
The vision perished soon or late,  
Whereat the city entered the tomb,  
And with the dreamer shared the fate.  
They left the city to rebloom  
The vision of men who re-create.

Wars, laws and trade are like the sounds  
Of brawlers, drunkards on their rounds.  
All passes from the nation's life  
Save truth and beauty. The warring state  
Is clouds which rising evaporate.

*(A Woman comes over to him and sits by him.)*

WOMAN

You are a stranger here?

KELLO

That's true.

WOMAN

Remain so.

KELLO

What's the matter? Sore?

WOMAN

Nothing! I'm just the village whore.

KELLO

Is that all?

WOMAN

Honest through and through  
I know the women from toe to head.  
They're fit for nothing except the bed,  
To please a man, and bear, be fed.  
How many have you ever seen

Who could a kitchen manage, or cook,  
Or sew, or run a sewing machine,  
Or fill a lamp with kerosene,  
Or think a thought, or judge a book?  
Damned few! And yet they're going to vote.  
The country's ruined. They hate me here  
Because I know these things so clear.  
And when I see an idiot tote  
A lazy doll upon his back,  
And give her money and call her pure,  
Angelic, beautiful, let her slack,  
Eat him alive to let him woo her,  
I speak out saying, "Mistress or wife  
For one thing you are giving your life.  
Whereas I'm honest, say for five  
You can have all that she can give."

KELSO

What is the matter now? You're down.

WOMAN

Nothing, just driven out of town.  
I used to be the one diversion  
For staring eyes and idle talk;  
They used to gather at four o'clock  
To see me, by their own assertion:  
"Let's see the whore out for her walk."  
Which saying they waited at Emmons' Block.  
Outside of church and the revival  
There was no other sensation here,

Except my walking, a deprival  
When from these streets I disappear—  
No less I seek a fresh career.

KELSO

Where will you find it in a land  
Where mostly mountebanks and dupes  
Compose the dialogue and command  
The action of the nation's troupes?  
Though in a circus the tumblers' and  
The riders' numbers far exceed  
The spotted fools, the loud buffoons,  
Yet over the land who has the lead;  
Who is it wins the city, town;  
Who is it makes the regnant tunes;  
Who is it writes the bookish creed;  
Whose titter is it, or ribald frown  
That levels art, the noble deed?  
It is the mountebank or clown.

WOMAN

It's money, friend, for men must feed.  
Get money, or they'll put you down.  
*(A hearse and funeral procession go by.)*

KELSO

Who's dead?

WOMAN

Why, no one. Just illusion,



Just for the moment overcome  
By thoughts malicious, and collusion.  
That dead man there was stricken dumb  
A week ago, was dead in fact;  
He was by enemies attacked  
With mortal thoughts. And then his wife,  
A healer, brought him back to life.  
She sat before him, said, "Calvin,  
Calvin, wake up! Your enemies  
Frustrate, and loose the mortal sin  
Wherewith your foes have closed your eyes."  
Calvin sat up, began to pray;  
Then said he didn't want to stay.  
So there he goes now in the hearse—  
Not dead, of course—but yet I'll say  
I can't imagine much that's worse.  
I'm going now, my friend. Good day.  
(*She walks away hurriedly. Kelso enters a drug store.*)

KELSO

Tobacco, please!

DRUGGIST

Where have you been?  
Nothing today but medicine.

KELSO

Today?

DRUGGIST

This is the Sabbath day,  
We're Christians here.

KELSO

You are? I swan!

DRUGGIST

The Holy Bible rules. Move on!

KELSO

Is there a place where nature might,  
You know, be eased?

DRUGGIST

In such a plight  
The roadway weeds you cannot miss.

KELSO

So is it in the metropolis  
At times as well as in a hole  
Of bigotry and fraud like this.  
Americans are acrobats  
For swallowing camels, straining gnats.

*Scene 4: The New Salem Hill, which is now a cow pasture. A man driving a carriage comes up the hill from the river, and enters at a gate at the east. With him are some sightseers.*

## DRIVER

Stand on this hill's brow first and see  
The lovely country to the east,  
The river winding. Near that tree  
Is where the old mill used to be.  
Everyone here is long deceased.  
The dam is gone.

## A MAN

So this is all!  
Where did the Rutledge Tavern stand?

## DRIVER

We've tried to find the spot and failed.  
They're raising money to overhaul  
The whole place and survey the land,  
Get maps, discover how they scaled  
The lots and streets; mow down the weeds,  
Consult the records of wills and deeds;  
Find the foundations; re-erect  
The town with logs, and thus restore  
Everything as it was before.

## A WOMAN

So this is where great Lincoln's youth  
Was frittered?

## A MAN

Is there any truth  
In that tale of a fisherman

Who lived here and with Lincoln chummed,  
A reading vagrant—I don't know  
His name—who helped him when he thumbed  
The plays of Shakespeare?

DRIVER

Jack Kelso!

That is the truth.

THE MAN

And what became  
Of Jack Kelso?

DRIVER

We never knew;  
He vanished like a candle flame.  
*(Kelso appears at the top of the hill.)*

A WOMAN

The cow bells tinkling make me blue—  
There's nothing here but weeds and grass.

ANOTHER WOMAN

And that cornfield just over there.

DRIVER

Good day, sir! May I ask you where  
You come from?

KELSO

Quite a little west,  
Just five miles from the town Adair.

DRIVER

You look so native that I guessed  
You knew about this hill.

KELSO

I've read

A lot about it. And I walked  
To see it.

DRIVER

Then you cannot shed  
Much light upon it. We are balked,  
Not only now, but our committee,  
About the houses, where they stood,  
The Rutledge Tavern.

A MAN

It's a pity.

KELSO

I'd like to help you if I could.

*(The party strays away, goes down the hill and disappears. Kelso walks to a spot and stands looking the prospect over.)*

KELSO

This is the very spot! I sight  
That giant elm, giant oak;  
Look to the left and to the right,  
And back of me, and so evoke

The distances so often scanned.  
What evenings here I saw the smoke  
By flames upon the hearthstone fanned  
Ascend and mingle with the haze  
Of autumn in October days!  
Or when the bright stars did not say  
This happiness will pass away,  
But promised long continuance!  
This is the place we had the dance!  
Look at me now! I am not merely  
A withered arm whose fingers tingle;  
The arm is severed, vanished clearly.  
What I remembered, hoped to find  
Is but the stumps of nerves that mingle  
Their reflex in a longing mind.  
Nothing is here! Where shall I fare?  
Life and the world are lost! Now death!  
Courage to meet the foe and dare  
His ice grip with my latest breath.  
I know a well by Concord Creek,  
Which Lincoln also told me of.  
Down in its darkness I will seek  
Oblivion for my life and love.  
No one shall know my burial place,  
And Time my memory shall efface.

*(He walks on. Stops again.)*

This spot is where my cabin stood.  
Well, Sarah, call it what you choose:  
The power of being true and good,  
Which downs the false, the wretch pursues;

Call it the judgment of the crowd,  
Shallow and worthless; yet 'tis strange  
It steals behind you, strange it hunts  
Like the Eumenides, while you range  
Not far enough in all the earth  
Where neither it trails you nor confronts.  
I did not kill her! But the worth  
Of that denial takes the breath  
Of judgment, like a shibboleth,  
And blabs the Vengeance of the birth  
Of merely wishing for her death.

*(He walks on.)*

Here is the graveyard's spot. No stone,  
No mound the merit to declare  
Of Justice Green—or anyone!

*(He walks on.)*

Here was the slope of mimic mirth,  
Where my Hephaistos was undone.  
He's triumphed in the country now;  
Only my art has failed somehow.  
Where is Jack Armstrong, Hannah, where  
Squire Godbey? Vanished into air.

*(He walks away.)*

Life is one tomorrow and tomorrow  
After another of clearest dawns,  
And reasoned vision, which turn to sorrow,  
Folly, and ruin the plans and hopes  
Of ardor and soul intoxication,  
Dreams so feasible fair, but swans  
Made geese that cackle the adoration

Out of the wine of life. The soul  
Believing is a telescope,  
And plans by stars. It sees the goal  
And what is real by the microscope.  
Between the farthest stellar globes  
And germs of anthrax lies his woe;  
Between the planets and microbes  
His tragedies and his overthrow.

*Scene 5: Squire Godbey's son and grandson are driving on a road near Concord Church, and are approaching the house of John McNamar, now a very old man. The house sets amid trees near the road. In its gable is a sign, "Salt for Sale." It is afternoon of the same Sunday.*

GRANDSON

Stop, father, at McNamar's house,  
Buy me some candy.

SON

Yes, I will.

GRANDSON

I'd like to see his son, Old Bill,  
And hear him talk about the spouse  
Grandfather wouldn't let him wed.

SON

He was too crazy, father said.



GRANDSON

His father isn't, everyone says.

SON

I know. But heaven punishes  
A man sometimes for secret sin.  
And John McNamar didn't treat  
Ann Rutledge right—the origin  
Of John McNamar's life defeat;  
At least I think so, even think  
That Bill McNamar link by link  
Is traceable to Ann's despair.

GRANDSON

What do you mean by that? Do tell.

SON

I mean that God gave John the care  
Of an idiot boy, a laughable  
Son as a life-long punishment  
For Ann's last days, that we lament  
Even to now, and after years,  
Thinking of Ann's disconsolate tears.

GRANDSON

God would do that, I do believe.

SON

Yet, when you see old John take note  
Of every word he says to weave

A romance from his feeble throat.  
For now that Lincoln's fame is great  
He loves to hang to Lincoln's coat,  
And be a figure in his fate.  
Watch all he says. When you are grown  
You'll have a story to relate  
Of John McNamar, whom you heard—  
Try to remember every word.

*(Bill McNamar steps from the weeds at the side of  
the road.)*

SON

There's Bill McNamar now. Hello!  
Come over, Bill, a minute. Whoa!

BILL MC NAMAR

It's me. It's Old Bill, poor Old Bill!

SON

Where are you going?

BILL MC NAMAR

I don't know.

My dad has driven me from home.  
I voted for a Democrat.  
It made him mad, it made my dad.  
Now where on earth will Bill be at?

SON

Well, you are grown. And you can make  
Your way somehow with scythe or rake,

Or ax—you must be fifty—how  
Old are you, Bill?

BILL MC NAMAR

Well, I allow  
I'm fifty, sixty, seventy maybe.  
I've been a natural since a baby;  
Hain't never had no luck at all  
Since I didn't marry Jane McFall.  
I went to see your dad about it;  
You're better, Bill, he said without it.  
Ha! Ha! The Squire just shook his head,  
Just shook his head; the old Squire said  
You never can marry, the old Squire said.  
I wanted to marry Jane McFall;  
You know old man McFall who squatted  
Long time ago at Clary's Grove?  
The Squire just shook his head and trotted;  
He was carryin' cobs for the kitchen stove;  
He walked away and left Old Bill  
A-standin' there, and left Old Bill.

So I lit my pipe and said I'd go  
To Granny Saunders, the fortune-teller  
There in the timber, Granny Saunders-r-r-s.  
To have my fortune told, you know.  
And Granny said my dad was yeller,  
And runned away and left Ann Rutledge,  
McGrady's cousin livin' by Concord,  
Runned away, Old Granny said.

When he come back here Ann was dead;  
Ha! Ha! New Salem had the jaunders,  
That's what she told me, Granny Saunders,  
And everybody was gone or dead.

So my dad married another woman,  
Married and planted a field of corn  
That very spring, Old Granny said.  
He married and Old Bill was born,  
Ha! Ha! Ha! Old Bill was born,  
A natural, and so it fussed him.  
And that's the why Old Bill can't marry;  
His dad has cussed him, dad has cussed him.  
What his dad did has cussed him, cussed him;  
Cussed Old Bill, has cussed Old Bill,  
Cussed him, e-e-ep, s-i-~~i~~-i-it has.

SON

Do you want to ride?

BILL MC NAMAR

No, I am going  
The other way, the other way.

SON

Good luck then to you, Bill!

BILL MC NAMAR

Good day.  
*(He goes along the road smoking his pipe.)*

GRANDSON

Father! What makes him talk so strange!

SON

Has always talked so from the first.  
Here now is the McNamar grange,  
Where lives the man by heaven cursed.

*(They get out of the vehicle and knock at the door.)*

*Scene 6: The interior of John McNamar's house: a room small and poorly kept. McNamar, very old, is sitting by a window looking out. He hears the knock at the door.*

MC NAMAR

You can't come in. I told you that.  
You voted for a Democrat.  
I know all fools that ticket vote,  
But you're the biggest fool of all.

SON

It's Russell Godbey with his son,  
It's nothing at all political.  
I want to hear an anecdote,  
My son wants candy.

MC NAMAR *(opening the door)*

Anyone

But Bill McNamar is welcome here.

I'll get the candy. Have a chair.

*(He gets the candy and sits again by the window.)*

SON

I want my son to hear you tell  
About Ann Rutledge. Tell him where  
She died.

MC NAMAR

I'm glad to do it. Well,  
You see that currant bush? The old  
House stood there—I'm choking up—  
Her death has been a bitter cup.  
The half of it has not been told.  
The house these many years is gone.  
I loved her as my promised bride—  
I wish that I myself had died,  
Yet I live on and on and on.

SON

Where was she buried?

MC NAMAR

About a mile  
Southeast of here.

SON

At Concord?

MC NAMAR

Yes.

SON

Exactly where?

MC NAMAR

It's a long while  
Since Ann was buried, but I guess  
She's buried near my mother.

SON

So

You don't know where?

MC NAMAR

I hardly know.

I left the county in thirty-two,  
Or thirty-three, and didn't return  
Till thirty-five. My mother passed  
While I was gone. I didn't learn  
That she was dead until at last  
I walked New Salem's deserted hill.  
Then I came out to Concord. They've  
Never put up a stone for Ann,  
Nor for my mother buried near her.  
I never could locate either grave.  
So sleep these precious women, dearer  
To me than all in life's brief span.  
I hope you'll pardon an old man's tears,  
For weakness comes with length of years.  
But if you went to see Jim Berry  
You might find out where Ann is buried.

You see I'm shut in. Russell Clary  
Might tell you, if you're not too hurried.  
Go find it.

SON

I believe I will.  
I'm going to Berry's anyway  
To buy his hogs, and while I'm there  
I'll ask about the graves and where  
They are located. So good day  
And blessings on you, sir.

MC NAMAR

Good-bye.  
I'm old and feeble, pretty nigh  
To death—and yet I hate to die.

SON (*lingering*)

Did Lincoln ever come to pay  
At Ann's grave his respects?

MC NAMAR

Not since  
I lived here; never, so they say  
At any time did he evince  
An interest in her.

SON

Didn't he moan  
About the rain upon her grave?



MC NAMAR

Why didn't he give her a handsome stone?  
It's all right, maybe, to free the slave;  
But a President grown great and rich  
Might buy a stone, and letter it, which  
Would prove his feelings were as human  
As mine for this neglected woman.

(*They go out.*)

*Scene 7: It is toward nightfall. The son and the grandson have arrived at Concord Church, an abandoned structure with broken windows and flapping doors. The father gets out of the vehicle to go into the churchyard, leaving the son to watch and hold the horse.*

SON

Stay here, my boy, a moment while  
I run across here, climb the stile,  
And search around a little, too.  
I've just a minute, evening comes;  
The cattle low, the partridge drums.  
I have a feeling the grave of Ann  
Has got a stone, and plain in view.  
If I don't find it Berry can  
Tell me, perhaps, the very place.

GRANDSON

Let me go, too—put Pepperdog's  
Halter on him and tie him—

SON

No!

I haven't but a minute's space,  
Or else I won't get Berry's hogs.  
Sometime I'll come here, take you in.

*(He gets out and runs into the graveyard. A bird feigning a wounded wing flutters along the ground.)*

GRANDSON

Beautiful bird, I love you so.

*(He leaps from the vehicle and attempts to catch the bird. It eludes him and he pursues.)*

GRANDSON

Fly not my hands, be mine, O bird.

*(The horse starts to walk away, then trots down the hill and disappears. The boy follows the bird and suddenly falls into the old well by Concord Creek.)*

GRANDSON (*disappearing*)

O God, forgive me for my sin!

SON (*coming from the graveyard and looking around*)

What in the devil! Hey! Hello!

Where are you? Where did that rascal go?

He's driven away in a boyish pet.

My, what a whaling he will get!

*(He hurries away.)*

*Scene 8: It is night. Bill McNamar, smoking his pipe, is sitting near Ann Rutledge's grave in Concord Churchyard. He lights a match for his pipe, and brings it close to the headstone.*

BILL MC NAMAR

I can't read very well, I can't;  
I can't read well, not very well,  
But I can read enough to tell  
That this stone by this mullein plant  
Reads—let me spell, now let me spell.  
A-N—and N, and that spells Ann;  
And R and U and T is Rut;  
And L and E and D and G,  
And E again—ha! ha! must be  
Rutledge, by God, some fellow cut  
Here on this stone! And yet my dad  
Who drove me off like a yaller cat  
For voting for a Democrat,  
For being a man, and living a man,  
Like any man, and getting mad  
Because I was, my ornery dad  
He says he never knowed where Ann  
Was buried, buried, buried—Ann.  
*(An owl hoots in a near-by tree.)*

THE OWL

Who! Who! Who! Who! Wh-o-o-o!

BILL MC NAMAR

Hoot! Hoot! I ain't afeard of you.  
I'll sit right here if I want to,  
Till daylight, u-u-u-m if I want to.

*Scene 9: Kelso climbs the hill, looks at Concord Church, and sits wearily on the dilapidated steps. It is now quite dark; but the stars are shining.*

KELSO

No more the faith of Concord Church, of love and penitent tears;  
Concord Church is a ruin of doors which mourn for the pioneers;  
Concord Church is a fallen shrine of forgotten hopes and fears.

*(He covers his face with his hands.)*

Now in the still night to wait  
The time, the summons, the fate.  
After all wanderings this is the end!  
After the flower of love, how brief, how sweet!  
The search for wisdom, peace, the vanished friend.  
So ends it here in loneliness, defeat;  
I lost the way, somehow, with straying feet.  
*(The boy calling from the well gives him the illusion that his name is being called.)*

THE VOICE

Jack!

KELSO (*imagining that he sees the ghost of his wife Sarah*)

Sarah! From the spirit land!  
Speak! Not forgiveness—that is too much.  
Say that my vagrant life you understand,  
Questing for oracles upon a crutch.  
(*The illusion fades away.*)

THE VOICE

Jack!

KELSO (*he imagines that he sees Lincoln*)

Abe! So you appear  
My oft-neglected duty to lament,  
Your right as victor in a higher sphere.  
I vanish—would my evil, too, were spent—  
The good you did increases year by year . . .  
Duncan is in his grave.  
(*The illusion fades away.*)

A WHIPPOORWILL

Whippoorwill! Whippoorwill!  
Whippoorwill! Whippoorwill!

KELSO

That is my call! The time is come!  
The Concord well now, blind and dumb!  
(*He goes to the well, and starts to climb in it. The grandson moans and calls.*)









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